TORY EMOCRACY

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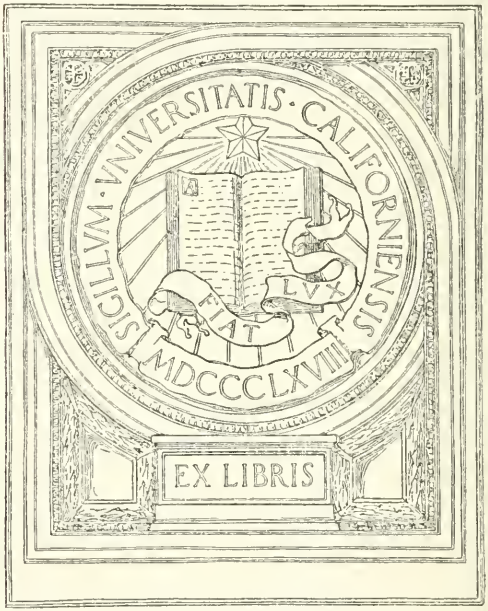

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BY

J. M. KENNEDY

AUTHOR OF "THE QUINTESSENCE OF NIETZSCHE,"
"RELIGIONS AND PHILOSOPHIES OF THE EAST," ETC.

"We had to prepare the mind of the country, and to educate—if it be not arrogant to use such a phrase—to educate our party. It is a large party, and requires its attention to be called to questions of this kind with some pressure."—DISRAELI, *Speech at the Edinburgh Corn Exchange, October* 29, 1867.

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PREFACE

This is a book for Tories. It is incidentally a criticism of Liberalism, Socialism, and Radicalism, and of the sentimentality which usually accompanies these isms. But I have aimed at making it more than anything else an accurate exposition of what the real policy of Conservatism is, and what it should be. The speeches of Conservative leaders in the House of Commons and the House of Lords, the writings of the leader writers in most of the Conservative papers, make it quite clear that the party as a whole is muddled in regard to the essentials of its philosophical basis. It does not know the meaning of representative government. It does not know where its real strength lies; it does not sufficiently distinguish between the influence of land and the influence of capital. It does not see that its supporters are to be found among the working classes rather than among the middle classes. It does not attach sufficient importance

to new ideas or new political principles. It has no positive policy. It is an amiable, good-natured, wealthy, dull, stupid party.

I have endeavoured to show, with the aid of the influential supporters mentioned in the notes and elsewhere, what the importance of ideas really is. I have actually shown what representative government means as compared with government by delegates. And I have particularly laid stress upon a Tory policy of social reform, and shown what initial steps must be taken before such a reform is brought about.

Shall I hear complaints because, being a Conservative, I have ventured to criticise the Conservative Caucus and the Conservative leaders generally? It is possible; but it must be admitted that the Conservative leaders deserve severe criticism, with the exception, in some instances, of Mr Balfour. A party which was blind to the effects of the Insurance Bill, for example, and the causes underlying the recent strikes, is almost beyond redemption. The Conservative leaders, whatever their private opinions may be, can only be judged on the merits of their published utterances or writings, and these are not, as a rule, such as to inspire confidence in the knowledge they possess of the problems now confronting English statesmen. This book is an

attempt to put forward some of these problems precisely, and to give a few hints towards their ultimate solution.

I hope I may have done some little service to the Conservative party in pointing out that there is a fundamental, and not merely a superficial, distinction between Conservatism and Liberalism. Contrary to what appears to be the general Conservative belief, there can be no party policy without a philosophic basis of some sort; and the philosophic bases of Liberalism and Conservatism differ entirely. The distinction between classicism and romanticism in literature is no greater than the difference between Liberalism and Conservatism in politics—the distinction, indeed, arises from the same causes and leads to the same results.

Another matter on which I have thought it worth while to lay some emphasis is the new anti-socialist movement in continental thought: not merely Nietzsche's criticisms on Democracy and Socialism from the standpoint of a higher morality; but the general philosophic movement against the totally erroneous principle of the equality of man. This, of course, necessarily involves the censure of some favourite Liberal doctrines: internationalisation, the equality of races, and so on.

In short, so far as politics is at present concerned, there would appear to be very little difference between the programme of the Liberals and the programme of the Conservatives. The main differences are in regard to questions like the disestablishment of the Church in Wales, Home Rule for Ireland, and education. But, compared with the grave economic and sociological problems necessarily engendered by the new movement in labour circles, these questions are trifling. Economic reform is everything. For the economic riddles of our time the Liberal offers a solution which, in my opinion, tends to degrade the workman and to pave the way for a violent series of labour explosions later on. Up to the present, these Liberal proposals have met with the approval, in principle, of the Conservatives. Tariff Reform alone will not solve the question ; it can only help to solve it partially. I offer a much bolder, but, I believe, eminently practicable solution. A new school of economics is arising—not Liberal, not Socialistic, but a Tory democratic school—and it is for the Conservative party to take advantage of it.

J. M. KENNEDY.

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I

THE OLD AND THE NEW

By this time it is superfluous for the Liberal Press and Liberal speakers to keep on reminding us day after day that there are no ideas in the Tory party. This fact has for some time been obvious to the few modern Tories who can recognise a new idea when they see one. It is, no doubt, distressing that the number of such Tories should be so small; but there is still hope. New and powerful ideas concerning government, indeed, lie scattered over the Continent from St Petersburg to Madrid; they are to be found in all sorts of unlikely places. Now, only those men count who are able either to create new ideas for themselves or to appreciate and develop the new ideas created for them by others—the former qualification necessarily including the latter. Men of both categories are rare; the first more so than the second. So an unintelligent party, which has withstood without

a murmur the platitudes of the Tory Front Benchers for the last ten years or more, and the even more melancholy platitudes of Tory leader-writers, may well condescend to go abroad to learn. A thorough study of Continental writers on political science (or at any rate of the few English writers who are interpreting them for the British public) is essential for giving the Tory party that intellectual basis of which it now stands so sorely in need.

The first duty of any writer who is dealing with democratic systems of government is to point out the enormous difference between the ancient and the modern acceptations of the word Democracy. The literal meaning, "rule of the people," is obvious enough; but "people" in Athens meant the freemen and not the slaves. Furthermore, "rule of the people" in Athens meant the rule of the men only. In modern times, on the other hand, Democracy means the rule of every class in the community (in theory), and includes even the working classes, *i.e.* those who, in ancient times, would have corresponded in a very great measure to the slaves. Again, one of the main items on the programmes of the professedly democratic parties in modern times is the equalisation of the sexes and votes for women, thus further widening the gap between ancient and modern Democracy.

There are still other distinctions, however. Apart from the fact that the labouring classes in ancient communities had no power—for they were slaves—and that, under modern voting systems, they have, in theory, the preponderating power in the State, since they are in the majority, ancient Democracy was not associated with the idea of a State on a large scale, but rather with the idea of a city. This prevailed even far into the Middle Ages. Close readers of Machiavelli, for example, cannot have failed to notice how often we meet in his works with the word " città " (city, *i.e.* πόλις), and how relatively seldom with " stato " (state). The free towns of Flanders and of Germany (*e.g.* Hamburg) are other instances of the survival of this ancient form of government; and although in the Middle Ages slavery had been abolished in Western Europe generally, the working classes did not thereby acquire any real power or influence in the administration.

Even now, however, we have not exhausted our list of the main distinctions between ancient and modern Democracy. In Athens, for instance, it was perfectly feasible for every citizen to appear personally in the Assembly to speak and vote. In Rome the citizens were able—at all events in the earlier period of the Republic—to control

their lawgivers. The scenes at the election of tribunes are referred to in the works of the older annalists, selections from which have fortunately been preserved for us by Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus; and Macaulay has admirably touched upon them in his ballad of "Virginia."[1] As the city gradually extended its power, however, certain old Roman ideals which were prominent in the early days of the Republic disappeared. The stern and honest Cato was, in a sense, the last typical Roman of the old school, and in the interval which elapsed between his death and the delivery of Cicero's speeches, we can easily see that the change that had come over the form of government in Rome was very great.

Even in the later period of the Republic, however, it is clear that the Democracy of the time was able to exercise a more strict control over its rulers than in the period of the Empire, though it must not be forgotten that the word Democracy applies here in its limited sense. The slaves, *i.e.* the labouring classes, being excluded, the ancient Democracy could show a relatively much larger amount of intelligence than is now shown by the modern Democracy. We must not overlook, too, the fact that systems of representation or

[1] Besides the fragments of the annalists, cf. Plutarch's *Life of Camillus*, xlii.

delegation were practically unknown in former times. In Greece particularly, the citizens of a πόλις were acquainted with one another, and the mere wind-bag was discounted. He could not then, as he can now, leave a town where he was well known and seldom heeded to inflame by superficial arguments and glib rhetoric the inhabitants of some distant locality.[1] The government of Athens was a modern vestry-meeting on a large scale. Themistocles, Plutarch tells us, undertook to learn the names of the citizens of Athens, and was able in time to call each one by his name, "which gained him much popularity."[2]

To sum up the main distinctions, then, we see that the ancient Democracy did not include the lower classes and labourers, but rather the craftsmen, a highly intelligent section of the community with which our modern mechanical working classes can scarcely be compared at all. For machinery had not been introduced to do away with the individual attention given by each workman to his task, which was in itself a stimulant and mental developer of no little magnitude. Again, the ancient states were small, so small that the name of "city" clung to such territorial

[1] Where Rome was concerned, however, *vide* a significant passsage in Cicero's *De Senectute*, vi. 20, where there is a bitter quotation concerning "oratores novi, stulti adulescentuli."

[2] Plut. in *Themist.*, v.

divisions down to the Middle Ages ; and, lastly, modern systems of delegation and representation were not known.

The ancient Greek philosophers naturally turned their attention to the subject of government, and the views of the Hellenic world in general are well represented in Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*.[1] Plato, the earlier thinker, conceived of the ideal state as one in which the philosophers were to be kings, though an Italian psychologist, Dr L. G. Sera, has pointed out with some reason that probably more harm would be done to statesmanship if philosophers governed than to philosophy if mere kings philosophised. Aristotle's opinions differed from Plato's in many vital respects, and usually for the better.[2] I shall refer to the principles of

[1] While it is true that a few critics have hesitated to attribute the *Politics* to Aristotle, there is no doubt in the minds of the best authorities that he wrote the book. It is, at any rate, thoroughly Aristotelian in spirit, as a comparison with his other works will easily prove. The same, however, cannot be said of the recently discovered *Constitution of Athens*, printed from a MS. found in the British Museum. This essay, judging from its general tone and the internal evidence of style, seems to me to be wholly or in great part the work of a pupil.

[2] Compare Plato's *Republic*, *Politicus*, and *Laws* with Aristotle's *Politics* ; and see also Jowett's introductions and notes (though Jowett is much too favourable to Plato), Newman's introduction and notes to his edition of the Greek text of Aristotle's *Politics*, and Bluntschli's *Theory of the State*, bk. vi., ch. xvii., on the Greek aristocracy.

both thinkers at greater length in a succeeding chapter. At this stage of our inquiry, the view that philosophers should be concerned in ruling is one, perhaps, which is worthy of some special discussion, and an apparent digression may be excused.

The most ancient and probably the most commendable practice was that prevailing in India and China. In China, as we may judge from a study of Confucius, the philosopher was rather the companion of the king, and his advice was often sought when difficult questions came up for discussion and solution. But in India the philosophers were the real rulers, without, however, being contaminated by coming into that contact with men and things which the actual work of ruling necessarily involves. This, of course, does not mean that they were only idealogues; quite the contrary. They were keen psychologists, as all statesmen should be; and at an early period in Indian history the Brahmans, *i.e.* the priestly and philosophical caste, raised themselves by the sheer force of their mental capacity above what afterwards became the secondary or warrior (kshattriya) caste.

One peculiarity of the Oriental, which has been commented upon by European thinkers of the most diverse shades of opinion, is his willingness,

his eagerness, in fact, to follow a leader in whom he is confident and for whom he feels respect.[1] Now, there is little doubt that the Brahmans were enlightened leaders, and for centuries they were venerated accordingly. They were loved in some cases and doubtless feared in others; but they were not followed for either of these reasons. They were followed because they were trusted, and they were trusted because they were recognised to be superior in mind to the other castes. They laid down the law; and it was the duty of the second caste, which included the kings and high administrative officials, to see that the laws thus laid down were carried into effect.

In Greece, then, about the time of Plato, we find that this principle no longer exists. The Greek philosophers are not the actual makers of the law, like the Indian philosophers; they are not even the advisers of the kings, like the Chinese philosophers: in fact, they have no status at all; so we find Aristotle, in the *Politics*, making an attempt to propose one for them.[2] When we endeavour to find out why this should be so, our curiosity will be satisfied by comparing

[1] "Aristocracy . . . may dispense with the affection, but never with the respect of its subjects" (Bluntschli's *Theory of the State*, bk. vi. ch. xix.: Remarks upon Aristocracy).

[2] See the passage in bk. iv., in which Aristotle speaks of "ex-rulers" and their share in the priestly functions.

the works of the Greek philosophers with those of the Indian philosophers: contrasting, say, the *Republic* of Plato with the Laws of Manu. The Greeks, while their level of abstract thought is extraordinarily high — so high that it has served as an ideal for generations of Europeans and even Mohammedans—is not of so high a standard as that of the ancient Indians. Philosophers degenerated; therefore they ceased to be respected, trusted, and obeyed. Order gradually became disorder; "values," to use Nietzsche's now generally understood term, were transvalued: the transition from aristocracy to democracy had begun.

Degeneracy on the part of the thinkers, therefore, thus had its inevitable repercussion. The "people," once deceived in their leaders, became suspicious of all leaders, more particularly in the Western world. Consequently, when men worthy of the name of philosophers and leaders did appear from time to time, they found it next to impossible to secure a hearing. Mind as such gradually fell into disrepute, and materialism gradually began to take its place as an object of worship. The famous utterance of one of the Republican mob in response to the petition for the reprieve of Lavoisier, "La République n'a pas besoin de savants," concisely sums up the

attitude of modern Western Democracy towards the higher faculties of man. Yet the Democracy itself is not altogether to blame. We cannot blame a horse if, in obedience to the rein in the hand of the rider, he plunges into an abyss. He that has been bitten by a serpent is terrified at the sight of a lizard, says the Italian proverb: "Cui serpe mozzica, lucerta teme"; and a deceived people (or, for that matter, a deceived political party) is equally distrustful of the "leaders" who have misled it and of the real leaders whose efforts might bring it back to the right path. For many centuries in the course of recorded history the best minds could count upon the unswerving fidelity of those whose mental powers were less developed and who were well content with their naturally inferior position. In a few rare instances we still see traces of this spirit in modern times, and it survives to a great extent in Western Europe even now. But, if the Democracy as a whole has got out of hand, the blame rests with those who formerly controlled it.

It will be seen that we have the makings of a very pretty problem here, and it may be advisable, before proceeding, to clear it up as far as the scanty material now at our disposal permits us. Why and how did the leaders of the Democracy degenerate ?

"Race," exclaimed Disraeli on one occasion, "race is the key to history!"[1] This is but the nineteenth-century acceptation of a truth which Gobineau's famous work on the inequality of races has enabled us to grasp more completely, but which, despite its apparent modernity, was known in India thousands of years before the birth of that Teacher according to whose nativity we Westerners reckon our calendar. From the internal evidence furnished by the Laws of Manu we can see clearly that the Indian philosophers degenerated owing to their matrimonial alliances with inferior beings; and medico-psychological investigations provide us with excellent reasons for supposing that the same principle may be applied for testing the degeneration of the philosophers of any age or country; for the physical factors underlying the degeneration of a race are analogous to those underlying the degeneration of a caste.

[1] Always a favourite principle of Disraeli's. He repeats it, for example, in his *Life of Lord George Bentinck*: "The truth is, progress and reaction are nothing but words to mystify the millions. They mean nothing, they are nothing; they are phrases and not facts. In the structure, the decay, and the development of the various families of man, the vicissitudes of history find their main solution—all is race." Again, in *Endymion*, Baron Sergius says: "No one will treat with indifference the principle of race. It is the key of history." Nietzsche has several aphorisms to the same effect: cf. *Peoples and Countries*, issued as a supplement to the *Genealogy of Morals*, the fourth book of the *Will to Power*, and chs. v. viii. and ix. of *Beyond Good and Evil*.

While touching upon this medical feature of the subject, I would emphasise the fact that the principle of degeneration through interbreeding with inferior types may be applied psychically. The physical alliance of a man of noble blood with an inferior creature will doubtless result in a much less noble offspring; but the mind is also liable to be affected apart from the merely physical connection. Association with inferior companions, with inferior pictures, with inferior books, existence amid dreary, dull, and uncongenial surroundings: all these things will affect the progeny of the mind—*i.e.* its thoughts—in as damaging a way as an inadvisable physical connection will affect the progeny of the body. There are strong bodily constitutions, as there are strong minds, which may for a time shake off such adverse influences. But it is to be feared that the ultimate ending is inevitable. The subject of the psycho-physical relationship between the mind and the body, which has only within recent years been seriously studied by the medical profession, has thus more to do with Tory Democracy than may appear at first sight.[1]

[1] On this point a few hints will be found scattered through a work dealing with quite a different subject, Dr P. E. Lévy's *Education rationnelle de la volonté.*

II

PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS

Historians, and other writers who have dealt directly or indirectly with political science, have given us varied opinions as to the exact date separating mediæval times from the beginning of our modern era. Even Bluntschli hesitates to lend his authority to any definite view. Some writers hold fast by the Renaissance, others by the Reformation, a few by the "glorious Revolution," and a large number by the French Revolution. But both the deposition of James II. and the fall of the Bourbons were due to theories which had been put in circulation long previously: theories, indeed, of which we are only now beginning to witness the ultimate effects. And the cause of these effects was the Reformation.

The distinction between the two main branches of the Christian Church is much more than a mere dogmatical quibble over the ingredients essential to the Communion: there is a profoundly moral

distinction; and it is this moral distinction which has influenced the political life of Europe, and incidentally the whole world, for centuries. In matters of faith and morals, Roman Catholics are bound by the authority of their spiritual leaders. In matters of faith and morals, every Protestant has a right to read the Scriptures and thus to decide for himself. A statesman must indeed be devoid of all psychological insight if he cannot see that this fundamental distinction in the moral code is bound to have its political effect. The Roman Catholic theory tends to compactness and order in the nation. The Protestant theory tends to unrestrained individualism. As Ostrogorski and Bluntschli have clearly perceived, the political struggles of the last two centuries have, at bottom, been waged between those who believed in individualism and those who believed in a social as well as a theological hierarchy.

In feudal times, of course, and even for some generations after the Reformation, the social hierarchy was a prominent feature of European nations. Even to-day the English aristocracy, in spite of its intellectual degeneracy and its frequent lapses, wields an influence which is unique in Europe. This is due not merely to the conservative and unchanging tendencies of the

English people as a whole, but also to the rather unusual theological conditions out of which our modern Church of England arose. When Henry VIII. shook off the papal dominion, the Church in England remained Catholic : the only change was that of its spiritual head. And it will not, I think, be denied that the modern English High Church closely approximates to the Roman Church in its ritual as well as in its moral point of view. A feature closely resembling the Confessional, and the influence exercised by High Church clergymen, particularly over women, are two factors which completely sever the High Church from the Low. The one is Roman Catholic in spirit, the other is Lutheran.

The German Reformation, then, had the effect, in England, of leaving about half the country exactly as it was, and turning the other half into Lutherans of innumerable varieties and sects—Calvinists, Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Supralapsarians, and so on, giving place in our days to sects like the Methodists and the Plymouth Brethren. The enormous number of Protestant sects need cause no astonishment. When everyone has a right to self-expression there will inevitably be almost as many doctrines and beliefs as there are individual men. What is of especial concern to us at the present moment is that this

principle of theological individualism spread into philosophy and politics and gave rise to an entirely new school of thought, a school which set itself to disseminate principles which necessarily lead to Liberalism, Radicalism, and a crude form of what may best be described as communistic Socialism. The chief names associated with this school in England are Hobbes, Locke, Tom Paine, Bentham, the so-called "Philosophical Radicals," and John Stuart Mill; while abroad the vices and virtues of the new school were summed up in Rousseau. The only noteworthy statesmen who ever opposed it were Burke and Disraeli. Burke, indeed, undermined the foundations of political individualism in a single speech, which I shall have occasion to refer to later on.

It is important to note a rough contrast, which holds good so often that it may almost be laid down as a general rule. The individualistic school has almost invariably been associated with traders, manufacturers, and financiers; and individualistic principles have invariably been supported by the political parties which made a point of looking after industrial interests: the Whigs, and the modern Liberals. The theological individualists (*i.e.* all the Nonconformists and the Low Church members) are to-day associ-

ated entirely with the Liberal party, which, as I propose to show, devotes the greatest possible attention to manufacturing interests and invariably penalises the workman in favour of the capitalist. The interests of the Tories and Conservatives, on the other hand, have always lain in the land ; and it is the territorial influence of the landowners and "lords of the manor" which has been effectual in preserving for so long the feudal spirit in England—that is to say, the hierarchical and anti-individualistic spirit which one is usually safe in associating with the spirit formed and developed by the Church of Rome.

In the course of the seventeenth century, however, those philosophers who had been influenced by the doctrines of the Reformers set themselves to the task of nullifying the spiritual influence of the Roman Church, and incidentally of destroying, or attempting to destroy, the remnants of the feudal spirit. We may instance Locke, passing over his famous *Letters on Toleration* to come to his *Treatises on Civil Government*, published in 1689. Chapter ii. of book ii. contains the fundamental principle of political individualism :—

To understand political power aright, and derive it from its original, we must consider what estate all men are naturally in ; and that is, in a state of perfect

freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of Nature, without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man.

A state also of equality, wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another, there being nothing more evident than that creatures of the same species and rank, promiscuously born to all the same advantages of Nature, and the use of the same faculties, should also be equal one amongst the other, without subordination or subjection, unless the lord and master of them all should, by any manifest declaration of his will, set one above another, and confer on him, by an evident and clear appointment, an undoubted right to dominion and sovereignty.

Locke repeats and emphasises this right of all men to absolute freedom, *e.g.* in bk. ii. ch. iv. of the same treatise :—

The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of Nature for his rule. The liberty of man in society is to be under no other legislative power but that established by consent in the commonwealth, nor under the dominion of any will, or restraint of any law, but what that legislative shall enact according to the trust put in it.

When Locke's views on property (*Civil Government*, bk. ii. 5) are taken in conjunction with the statements quoted above, it will be admitted

that he left little for Rousseau to add. Indeed, it would be but slight exaggeration to say that the works of men like Paine, Rousseau, Bentham, and Mill were simply commentaries on Locke, showing the conclusions to which his views ultimately lead.

After Locke's death we have to look to France rather than to England for the effects of his doctrines. Rousseau's *Contrat Social* was their natural outcome, as was likewise the French Revolution ; but Ostrogorski has been careful to point out that the reaction in England against French ideas of liberty after the Revolution was more apparent than real. These ideas " found a resting-place in the very heart of England ; they penetrated thither under cover of the utilitarian philosophy, so well suited to the positive English mind as regards its principle, but so highly revolutionary in its application." [1] Every man, of course, might be his own priest ; but not every man could be his own poet ; and there was no substitute in Lutherism for the grandeur of the Roman Catholic ritual. If a priest was to be regarded as little better than a layman, it inevitably followed that the attention of the layman would be gradually taken away from

[1] Ostrogorski's *Democracy and Political Parties*, pt. i. ch. i. sect. 3.

the more poetic and uplifting side of religion and fastened instead on material things; and this, indeed, was exactly what happened. The eighteenth century in England witnessed a striking increase in trade, and corresponding increases in the membership of those religious bodies and political parties which were concerned with the "interests" of the manufacturer. The Methodists and the Whigs, for example, both flourished, and the triumph of the individualists came with the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832.

It was Jeremy Bentham who was chiefly instrumental in giving a certain kind of philosophical support to the early nineteenth-century Whiggism. His method of testing long-established institutions was unique in its simplicity and fallaciousness. Is it useful? was the single question he ever thought of asking. Like all other Liberals, Bentham was culpably ignorant of the influence of tradition, the importance of which he entirely neglected. His utilitarianism was based merely on considerations of the moment: it does not seem to have occurred to him to ask whether his principles would apply equally well a century afterwards, or what their effect would have been had they been applied to political and social problems a century previously. These were

points, however, that never occurred to Bentham or the Philosophical Radicals. The ruling factor in man's life, from Bentham's point of view, was personal interest; and, in order that the individual might develop, the less the State interfered the better. Most men, he did admit, could not sufficiently distinguish between personal and general interest, so the law should intervene just to the extent necessary to prevent them from injuring one another. Every law, nevertheless, is "a dose of poison," because it is an infraction of the liberty of the individual. The best way of securing "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" [1] (*i.e.* of permitting the largest possible number of individualities to develop) is to take the administration out of the hands of the ruling classes, the aristocracy, the monarchy, and the Church, and put it into the hands of the "many," *i.e.* the mob. Hence Bentham logically plumps for the ballot, universal suffrage, and annual parliaments.

From this it will be seen that Bentham's view of human nature was as bookish as Rousseau's.

[1] This celebrated phrase appears to have been first used by Francis Hutcheson, in his *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725): "That action is best which procures the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers." Priestley, who helped to pave the way for Bentham, also uses it; but Bentham made it his own.

Bentham's man, indeed, as Ostrogorski puts it, never follows his impulses or his habits; he is always deliberating, always engaged in calculation, just as the personage of the ideologists does nothing but indulge in abstract reasoning. Consequently:

In his system men appear like each other in all latitudes. The government suited to them is the same everywhere—a representative democracy. Humanity is one and indivisible for Bentham, just as for the French ideologists. For Bentham, too, patriotism is bound to give way to it. . . . This synthesis of Bentham's, obtained by the same logical process as the synthesis of the French ideologists, was, like it, doomed to failure, but not because it originated in an ideal conception. Bentham's attempt, if it were a final one, would alone suffice to show how difficult or even impossible it is to discover a governing principle of life in the facts supplied by experience. Starting from a tangible fact, and obliged to take the road of ideology in spite of himself, Bentham repeated the error of the French ideologists, who, having set up an ideal controlling principle of social life, made no allowance for the counter-operation of social facts, but drew on it *ad infinitum*, like a universal legatee taking a mistaken view of the rights conferred on him by his legal title. In like manner Bentham took for his starting-point man not in the relative aspect which he bears in real life but in his abstract nature, and transformed him into a being complete in itself. Society consequently was reduced

to an aggregate of atoms, to a sum-total of interests requiring only to be left to themselves.[1]

With Bentham, nevertheless, the individualistic view definitely took the lead. Burke was overlooked; and the Tories had no other champion to combat the new philosophy. To get the average Tory to grasp a new idea is a difficult task at the best of times; but a century ago it was out of the question. The stream of thought initiated by Paley, Priestley, and Bentham carried all before it; and the "Philosophical Radicals," with the assistance of the *Westminster Review*, did the rest. Attacks on every ancient British institution followed one another without a pause, until at length the historical tradition of the nation was thought to be sufficiently broken. The great danger was, as can now be seen from a book like Roebuck's *History of the Whig Ministry*, or the *Personal Life of George Grote*, that Tories, particularly young men, attracted by the novelty of the new Radical doctrines, would adopt them while thinking that they themselves still remained Tories. This actually came to pass in many cases, exactly as many modern Conservatives sincerely believe that they are doing good service to their prin-

[1] Ostrogorski, *Democracy and Political Parties*, pt. i. ch. i. sect. 4.

ciples when they endeavour to outbid the Liberals and Socialists in the matter of State doles for workmen. Thousands of nominal Tories became familiar with Bentham's ideas, and added his principles to their own. The natural consequence was a state of muddle-headedness upon which Continental psychologists have seldom failed to comment.

All this idealistic philosophy of the early part of the nineteenth century was clinched by J. S. Mill in his three best-known works — *Liberty*, *Utilitarianism*, and *Representative Government*. So far as practical politics are concerned, Mill reaches almost exactly the same conclusions as his predecessor Bentham, the main distinction being that Mill held that pleasures should be judged by quality as well as quantity: "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied," he says.[1] Otherwise he added but little to the already existing political science of idealistic Liberalism. His conception of government is hazy, as we see when we compare him with a practical thinker like Bluntschli. In going through books like *Liberty* or *Representative Government*, indeed, the enlightened reader will little by little acquire the feeling

[1] *Utilitarianism*, ch. ii.

that Mill is not sure of himself. The truth is, Mill seems to be writing with one-half of his attention fixed on the practical British politics of his time, and the other half fixed on the idealistic principles which he had inherited from Locke, Rousseau, Bentham, and his own father. Throughout his whole life he never found any means of reconciling his idealistic doctrines with the needs of the English democracy, or with the various political problems that presented themselves, and the gap between theory and practice is seen in nearly everything he wrote.

Mill, for example, professed to believe in the representative system. He saw, however, that no system of government could be called truly representative if only the majority of the people were represented. He felt himself to be entirely separated from the school of thought typified in Burke, yet he could not see that the simple plan of representative government laid down by Burke was the only practicable form of representative government. Consider, for example, the following passage :—

> Two very different ideas are usually confounded under the name democracy. The pure idea of democracy, according to its definition, is the government of the whole people by the whole people, equally represented. Democracy as commonly conceived and hitherto

practised is the government of the whole people by a mere majority of the people, exclusively represented. The former is synonymous with the equality of all citizens; the latter, strangely confounded with it, is a government of privilege, in favour of the numerical majority, who alone possess practically any voice in the State. This is the inevitable consequence of the manner in which the votes are now taken, to the complete disfranchisement of the minorities.[1]

Up to this point, one might think of Burke's Bristol speech, with its preamble almost identical in spirit. Here, however, the two men separate. Mill goes on to speak of a "confusion of ideas"; but it is his own ideas which are confused rather than those of his opponents. He perceives that the minorities, to use his own expression, should not be blotted out; but he admits that, "in a representative body actually deliberating, the minority must, of course, be overruled."[2] All that Mill can propose is that minorities shall at least be heard before they are outvoted; and with this end in view he sees salvation in some system of proportional representation. In dealing with proportional representation, indeed, Mill is almost seized with intellectual hysteria: as Ostrogorski points out, the calm style of the

[1] *On Representative Government*, ch. vii.: True and False Democracy.
[2] Mill, *l.c.*

philosopher and abstract reasoner becomes almost lyrical; for in the fallacy of proportional representation Mill thought he had discovered the remedy for all the evils of individualistic government. Note this almost psalmistic passage from his *Autobiography*: Mill is referring to Thomas Hare's plan of proportional representation :—

I saw in this great practical and philosophical idea the greatest improvement of which the system of representative government is susceptible: an improvement which, in the most felicitous manner, exactly meets and cures the grand, and what before seemed the inherent, defect of the representative system: that of giving to a numerical majority all power, instead of a proportional power to its numbers, and enabling the strongest party to exclude all weaker parties from making their opinion heard in the assembly of the nation, except through such opportunity as may be given to them by the accidentally unequal distributions of opinions in different localities. . . . This great discovery, for it is no less, inspired me, as I believe it has inspired all thoughtful persons who have adopted it, with new and more sanguine hopes respectiug the prospects of human society, by freeing the form of political institutions towards which the whole civilised world is manifestly and irresistibly tending from the chief part of what seemed to qualify, or render doubtful, its ultimate benefits. Minorities, so long as they remain minorities, are, and ought to be, outvoted; but under arrangements which enable any assembly of

voters, amounting to a certain number, to place in the legislature a representative of its own choice, minorities cannot be suppressed.[1]

Of course, the fallacy here would be evident in practice. True, the minorities might be organised ; but in the representative assembly actually deliberating, of which Mill speaks, they would still be outnumbered, and consequently outvoted by the majority. And Mill himself specifically says that such outvoting is quite in order. "Minorities, so long as they remain minorities, are, and ought to be, outvoted," he remarks in the passage just quoted. In short, under any system of proportional representation, the minorities would not derive any political advantage. The rock on which the individualistic school perishes is that it cannot distinguish between numbers and weight. Hence, as Ostrogorski drily remarks, the modern democracy is not so much a democracy as an arithmocracy ; and, under an arithmocratical system of government, the more intelligent members of the community are necessarily neglected and overpowered, for they are always in the minority. But this is inevitable where individualism is the rule. It cannot be too strongly emphasised, it cannot be too often repeated, that *there can be no truly*

[1] Mill's *Autobiography*, p. 258.

representative government where the principle of mere majority rule prevails. Until this elementary doctrine of modern political science is grasped by politicians of every shade of opinion, the House of Commons will become more and more detached from the public feeling throughout the country as a whole. All, or nearly all, modern civilised countries appear to be committed to the principle of representative government. This may be right or wrong; but at least let the principle of representative government be thoroughly understood. The future lies between Burke and Mill. The doctrines of Burke lead naturally to order and stability; the doctrines of Mill lead equally naturally and inevitably to disunion and anarchy.

III

THE IMPORTANCE OF IDEAS

In the opening chapter of this volume I have referred to the influence of philosophers and their decadence. This point will be brought home to any reader who can turn to the volume of Hansard containing a report of the sitting of the House of Commons on May 30, 1867. The Reform Bill was under discussion at the time, and on the evening referred to Mill moved an amendment calling for the insertion of a clause relating to proportional representation. His arguments were in the style of the quotations from his works given in the preceding chapter; and he laid special emphasis on the fact that, if the suffrage were conferred on the multitude, local influence might eventually be swamped by the influence of central committees and professional politicians—a remarkably accurate forecast. The amendment was supported, though for entirely different reasons, by Viscount Cran-

borne, better known, doubtless, as the Marquis of Salisbury. In the course of his speech, Viscount Cranborne pointedly stated that the evils which Mill had in mind certainly existed, but that they were called into existence to a great extent by Mill himself and the philosophical school to which he belonged. It was the philosophers, said the Viscount, who had led the country into its difficulty; household suffrage was not brought forward to meet a practical necessity, but rather to comply with philosophical arguments.

Mill's amendment, as it happened, was lost; but we are concerned now with the line taken by Viscount Cranborne in his reply. He, at all events, clearly recognised the influence of philosophers; and he was quite right in maintaining as he did that no practical necessity was met by household suffrage, which would never have been needed had it not been for the idealistic arguments of Mill and his school. The same remark, indeed, applies to nine-tenths of the Liberal legislation proposed in the House of Commons: being Liberal and Radical, it is necessarily idealistic and almost invariably uncalled for. The Insurance Bill, for example, which Mr Lloyd George brought forward in the summer of 1911, was not wanted by the country, but was introduced merely in obedience to the dictates of the

theorists on the Liberal Caucus. The same remark applies to the various temperance bills introduced, and also to the three or four education bills. But there is obviously a certain philosophical backing for such bills, otherwise they would not originate at all. Such a philosophical backing is supplied by Mill and his predecessors, whose influence we are still feeling. But one is naturally inclined to ask, Why is there no counter-philosophy for the benefit of the Conservative party ? Why are the Liberal ideas of individualistic government not checkmated by Conservative ideas of government for the nation as an entity instead of government for the nation considered as a collection of jarring atoms ? Those who, like the writer, are on the whole of a Conservative tendency, will be pained when the answer to these questions is given. It is this : for at least three generations the Tories have been too stupid to appreciate the importance of ideas ; and they have usually driven from their ranks any man who showed the slightest trace of originality in this respect.

From the passing of the 1832 Reform Bill up to the present day, the Tories have, as a rule, been in a state of intellectual impotence and apathy. Unlike the late Marquis of Salisbury, they were incapable of appreciating the import-

ance of philosophers, and as a natural consequence the party is in a hopeless mess at the present time for want of the ideas which philosophers bring with them. I will not say that the party has no policy; for it has one, of sorts. But it has no why or wherefore; no ideas on which its policies can be built up and explained. The Liberals and Radicals and Socialists have. I do not for a moment admit the soundness of the philosophical foundation upon which Liberal Governments base their ideals; but that they can find such a foundation cannot be disputed. If, for example, the Chancellor of the Exchequer wants a reason to explain why the rich should help the poor to a greater extent than they now do, he has only to turn to the New Testament for arguments.[1]

Where, however, can the Tories turn for arguments? Firmly attached though I myself am to the principles of aristocratic government, I must reluctantly confess that, for years past, I have not heard of a new argument in favour of the nearest approach to it in England, *i.e.* Con-

[1] Mr Lloyd George, speaking at the Welsh Baptist Chapel, Castle Street, East, on June 11, 1911: ". . . All the poverty in London was really at the door of religion. It was the responsibility of the Christian Church. What was the first duty of the Christian Church? To look after the poor—to sell its goods, to see that there was not a single poor man in their midst. There was no hope for the miserable, wretched people who existed in England except through Christianity."

servatism, nor have I read one in any of the Conservative publications. Platitudes abound; nothing more. The Tories have nowhere to turn for arguments; and it is the first duty of anyone interested in the Conservative party to find out why it should be lacking in this respect. The second duty of the investigator is to supply the deficiency; but this second duty should on no account be carried out in detail until the leaders of the party realise why the first should be necessary.

Now, modern Tories never think where political arguments (*i.e.* new ideas of government) come from. They do not, as the leaders of the party seem to imagine, originate in the mind of the average man or among the employees attached to the Conservative Central Office or in the clubs. Ideas of all kinds originate only in minds of the highest order, among those original thinkers who are designated, somewhat vaguely and ambiguously perhaps, as creative artists. It is men of this type who, by their poems, plays, pictures, novels, essays, and so forth, stamp the age with a certain definite line of thought, and it is they who thus influence a vast and incalculable number of lesser men. If the thoughts of the foremost thinkers of a country at any given period are of an aristocratic tendency, then the general spirit

of that age in that country will be aristocratic. If the thoughts of such thinkers are democratic in spirit, then the tendency of the age will be towards Democracy. If, again, the two sets of thinkers are about equally balanced, the political thought of the country (especially if the country be England) will exhibit a spirit of compromise.

The trouble with modern Conservatism is that it is suffering from an absence of Conservative thinkers. Disraeli was the last ; for Lord Randolph Churchill was practically driven out of the party owing to his excessive originality—a remark which applies to his son, Mr Winston Churchill ; and also to a man like Mr Thomas Gibson Bowles. A search for a Conservative thinker nowadays will be undertaken in vain. Consider, for example, the men who have been most prominent in England as thinkers, creative artists, or, at all events, as " forces," during the last ten years or thereabouts. I will write down at a venture G. K. Chesterton, G. B. Shaw, Hilaire Belloc, Sidney Webb, H. G. Wells, Maurice Hewlett, Granville Barker, Havelock Ellis, Augustine Birrell, Sir Gilbert Murray, John Galsworthy, J. M. Barrie, L. G. Chiozza Money, Arnold Bennett, Eden Phillpotts, Hall Caine, Lord Morley, Hubert Bland, Herbert Paul, Jerome K. Jerome, A. E. W. Mason, Belfort

Bax, Oscar Browning. I do not say, of course, that these are all creative artists; I do not admit for a moment that their individual or collective efforts are to be regarded as a criterion of thought, or that what they have written must necessarily be taken as good philosophy or good literature. With most of them I personally wholly disagree. But, such as they are, they now act as "forces" in England, and have acted as such for some years. They are representative of such "mind" as we have among us. By their writings, historical, economic, or otherwise, they have influenced this country for a decade.

And they are all Liberals, Radicals, or Socialists: there is not a Conservative among them.

I have not professed to draw up a complete list; but the names I have given are sufficiently representative. If we examine our ranks of first-class thinkers, such as Belloc and Chesterton, or our second-class thinkers, such as Shaw and Wells, or our third-class thinkers, such as Herbert Paul, we shall find that they are overwhelmingly Liberal or Radical.

It is, indeed, surprising that no Conservative leader or leader-writer, no adviser of the party, has ever had the gumption to draw up such a list and to ask himself why it should be that the vast majority of our authors, dramatists, and so forth,

when they take any part in politics at all, should range themselves with the anti-Tories. If our most prominent thinkers are anti-Tory, the public generally will be anti-Tory; for, as I have said, all arguments for or against originate in a small circle of thinkers before filtering downwards.

Our thinkers are Liberal and Radical, not because they have any real affinity with the Liberal party, not because thought is "progressive" in the political sense of the word; but simply because in the course of the last forty or fifty years the governing classes in this country have treated all creative artists with contempt. Driven away from the party with which they had an affinity, thinkers and writers of all kinds have been forced either to ally themselves with the opposite side, or, as has happened in some cases, to remain neutral.

The effects of such a stupid policy were not of course felt immediately. Our Conservative party—*i.e.* the governing classes—had four strong supports on which they could rely: they possessed most of the land and most of the wealth, all the influence in the army, in the navy, and in the Church, and immense social prestige. So long as the Tories supported and encouraged the liberal arts—so long, at all events, as they did not show the contempt for creative artists

which they have manifested in recent years—matters went, on the whole, fairly smoothly. The very powers which they possessed, however, proved to be the undoing of the Conservatives, when they forgot that power had to be maintained as well as acquired. Land, wealth, and influence are transitory and ephemeral; principles are eternal. The apathy and philistinism of the Tories drove from their vanguard the only people who could maintain them in power, viz. the thinkers. The inevitable consequence followed. The thinkers, receiving no encouragement from their old supporters, turned to their opponents; and the Conservatives lived on their influence and prestige for a few years before the crash came in 1906.

This is no fanciful picture. The Liberal victory in 1906 was not due merely to disgust with the former government; it was due to the skilful arguments and original ideas of men like Chesterton and Belloc, not to mention the doctrines of the Mill school as brought up to date by Mr John Morley. The Liberals, Radicals, and Socialists, never possessing the influence and wealth of the Tories in anything like the same degree, naturally had to develop their wits. At the end of a generation the campaign of ideas had had its effect. The Tories were swept from

power, and a period of strong anti-Tory legislation began—nominally in the name of the "people," but actually at the behest of the Liberal Caucus. As the power of the Conservatives lay chiefly in the land, a measure was passed for splitting up the big estates into small holdings. Education Bills were introduced to do away with the Conservatives' influence in the schools. The House of Lords itself was attacked, until even the Conservatives themselves, hopelessly blundering for want of ideas, hastened to suggest widespread and ridiculous changes in the ancient Chamber.

The Tories, then, owing to a combination of apathy, ignorance, and stupidity, completely cast aside their natural leaders, the thinkers, after Disraeli's death. For this they have been suitably punished by the wave of Radicalism and Socialism which has since swept over the country. Their wealth and influence once undermined, they had to fall back upon new ideas and new principles of government; but none of their supporters had any ideas. The members of the party have been vainly looking for new ideas since the smash of 1906; but the search has not been very successful. There are many Conservatives, indeed, who find it difficult to distinguish between a new and important principle and a mere platitude, just as there are other

Conservatives who seek their philosophical support in the works of an out-and-out Radical like John Stuart Mill. It must be confessed, again, that the Tory intellect is by no means remarkable for its brilliancy, and it is difficult to make the average "hard-shell" member of the party understand the importance of ideas whenever they are brought to his notice.

When I made a suggestion to this effect in *The New Age*,[1] one or two critics wanted to know whether there were not any "other factors": one writer laid stress upon "political adroitness," and another on "dynamics." But the reply is that ideas underlie all these factors. A party that takes care to develop its intelligence will at the same time necessarily develop its political adroitness. A party that relies solely upon its wealth and influence will develop neither. Indeed, the very emphasis which one or two correspondents laid upon "tactics" points to another weak spot in the Conservative party. Good tactics are essential in political propaganda; but they are necessarily subservient to the policy of the party—if there is no policy, it follows that there is nothing to be "tactical" about. The Conservatives are now laying stress on the necessity for "tactics" simply because they have

[1] May 18, 1911.

no policy at all ; and they have no policy because they have no ideas.

To understand the indirect influence exercised by ideas, however, it must not be assumed that the thinkers in whose minds they originate are necessarily well known to the mass of the people. The contrary is more often the case, and in this connection the following remarks by W. E. H. Lecky will be found apposite :—

> The pressure of the general intellectual influences of the time determines the predispositions which ultimately regulate the details of belief ; and, though all men do not yield to that pressure with the same facility, all large bodies are at last controlled. A change of speculative opinions does not imply an increase of the data upon which those opinions rest, but a change in the habits of thought and mind which they reflect. . . . This standard of belief, this tone and habit of thought, which is the supreme arbiter of the opinions of successive periods, is created, not by the influences arising out of any one department of intellect, but by the combination of all the intellectual and even social tendencies of the age. Those who contribute most largely to its formation are, I believe, the philosophers. Men like Bacon, Descartes, and Locke have probably done more than any others to set the current of their age. They have formed a certain cast and tone of mind. They have introduced peculiar habits of thought, new modes of reasoning, new tendencies of inquiry. The impulse they have given to the higher literature has been by

that literature communicated to the more popular writers; and the impress of these master-minds is clearly visible in the writings of multitudes who are totally unacquainted with their works.[1]

It is the philosophers, then, the original thinkers, who must become Conservative again before Conservative views can be expected to permeate the masses. It seems fair to assume, however, that this result will never be brought about if we rely merely upon what Lecky calls the "tendencies of inquiry" in England alone. There is at present no wholly English school of thought which has for its aim the maintenance of government by the best (*οἱ ἄριστοι*) as opposed to government by the crowd. A crowd is unable to control itself, and not even the election of "leaders" from among its own units (as if "leaders" could be "elected") can compensate for the influence which must be imposed upon it from above.

There is no reason, however, why we should confine ourselves to England; for thought, like art, is universal, and new political principles are to be found elsewhere. If there had been any new Conservative ideas in this country, they would doubtless have appeared before now; but if we

[1] Lecky's *Rationalism in Europe*, Introduction.

look to the Continent for them, our search will not be in vain. If it is objected that Continental thought is even more democratic than ours—that, the French Revolution brought Socialism and Anarchy within the reach of the poorest, and that, on the other hand, autocratic governments like those of Russia and Germany are unsuited to this country—it must be answered that England has always been some twenty-five years behind the Continent where new ideas are concerned. The Radical trend of Continental thought during the earlier part of the nineteenth century could easily have been counteracted here had the ruling classes given adequate support to the Tory thinkers. But they did not ; and if, as a consequence, Tory thought has been stamped out here, we must look for it somewhere else.

To those who have closely followed intellectual movements on the Continent during recent years it will be clear that Nietzsche's writings have " set the current of the age " in an entirely new direction. Before, say 1890, when his views began to permeate other thinkers, German thought, and thus indirectly Continental thought, was dominated by Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer ; and these three thinkers, despite their many good qualities, built on a thoroughly democratic foundation. The essence of their thought

was plebeian, cloudy, idealistic—in short, Liberal.

Nietzsche assumed the task—a difficult one—of bringing philosophy down from the clouds of romanticism and setting it on a new basis—an aristocratic basis. Instead of indiscriminately glorifying modern Democracy, as so many other thinkers had done before him, he criticised and analysed it, more particularly its baser elements and forms: the stupidity and greed of the masses, their inability to appreciate great leaders; and, what was still worse, the yet greater greed and exclusiveness of the middle classes, their philistinism, their romanticism and idealism, their innate and ineradicable contempt for what is noble, their aversion to art, their utter lack of will and self-control.

In other words, after the publication of Nietzsche's works, mere mob and bourgeois rule ceased to be tacitly accepted and taken for granted by classes of thinkers who had previously refrained from putting it to the test. A new trend, less cloudy and infinitely less idealistic, was given to the thought of the age, and this trend is now seen in the works of men who were either contemporaries of Nietzsche (1844-1900), or who began to write in the generation immediately following him—*e.g.* Emile Faguet, E. Seillière, and Jules de Gaultier in France; E. G. Zoccoil,

L. Petrone, and L. G. Sera in Italy; Antonio Maura, Ramiro de Maeztu, Emilio Bobadilla, and Manuel Bueno in Spain; George Brandes in Denmark; Strindberg in Sweden; and of course every thinker of note in present-day Germany and Russia.

An enormous change, then, has come over Continental thought during the last thirty years or so, in regard to sociology and political science. The change has not been for the benefit of the mere capitalist, and still less for the benefit of the unidea'd demagogue. Not being idealistic and romantic, it is not a change that calls for the immediate or remote establishment of an entirely new order of society. It is simply a new trend of thought, which will have for its most proximate effect, not the abolition of class distinctions, which it may rather accentuate, but the abolition of class wars and the definite fixing of a social hierarchy.

Of this new spirit practically every European country but England is taking advantage. Our upper classes, who should be in the very front of all movements of this nature, have apparently ceased to buy books, and are almost insusceptible to new ideas. The late Mr Alfred Nutt, through whose death we lost one of the most cultured men of our time, once complained to me with quite unusual bitterness that the classes in England which used to give their support to literature had

ceased to do so for a generation, and that literature had suffered accordingly.

Not merely literature is suffering, however. If the upper classes have deserted philosophy, literature, and new thought, philosophy, literature, and new thought have deserted the upper classes. We have, to use Nietzsche's phrase, mob above and mob below. Mob below is perhaps the natural state of things and need not awaken our concern for the future of the race; but mob above is unpardonable. But, whereas thinkers can, at a pinch, dispense with our aristocracy, our aristocracy, as is but too obvious, cannot dispense with the thinkers. For example, a somnolent House of Lords, initiating nothing, and reposing only on its tradition and on its somewhat tarnished prestige, makes no very edifying spectacle. But a House of Lords allied with modern thought, and taking the initiative in new schemes of political science, economics, and sociology, would be invulnerable; for it would be solidly supported by the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, and, what is just as important at the present time, respected by the lower strata of the democracy. To quote Nietzsche again, however, it is hard to move the mire. Before the House of Lords can take its proper place in the country's politics, the antipathy of the Tories to new ideas must be utterly destroyed.

IV

LIBERALISM AND CONSERVATISM

THE root distinction between the true Conservative (*i.e.* the enlightened Tory who knows what Conservatism actually is) and the true Liberal is this: when the Conservative speaks of the "nation" or the "people" or the "Empire," he refers not merely to the people or the condition of things existing in his own time, but he has his mind fixed upon the nation's past or future as well as its present. The Liberal, on the other hand, does not speak of the past except with contempt. Like his master, Jeremy Bentham, he looks upon every old institution as outworn; he is all for "progress." Of "progress," however, or what it actually consists of, he has no very definite notion. Bentham and Mill, to give them their due, had. They thought that the world was undoubtedly progressing the more individualistic government became extended.

Individualism in politics, however, is rapidly having the same effect as individualism in religion. We have our political sects just as we have our religious sects, and they are mostly to be found among the Liberals. The word "progress" has a different meaning for our various political Supralapsarians and Anabaptists—the Socialist, the Communist, the Fabian, the English Radical, the Welsh Radical, the Scotch Radical, the Liberal, and that curious phenomenon, the "Moderate Liberal." As all our Lutheran religious sects find themselves unanimous, however, in their denunciation of the aristocratic Roman Catholic Church, so all our Liberal political sects find themselves unanimous when confronted with any signs of aristocracy in government, whether the aristocracy of the English High Church or the aristocracy of the landed county families and the nobility. The Liberal feels, in most cases quite sub-consciously, that these aristocratic factors tend to permanence; and permanence and Liberalism are at opposite poles. The Liberal cannot tolerate anything that descends from generation to generation; for he looks upon the innate and inherited forces of man as being susceptible of change from day to day and from year to year. He is not concerned with man in his fixed and permanent state, but with some

idealistic human being who is in a constant condition of transition from a state of "evil" into a state of "good," the definition of what is good and what is evil naturally varying with every fresh twist given to Liberal philosophy. The Liberal, in short, cannot understand the influence of tradition, and the place tradition occupies, and ought to occupy, in politics, art, literature, or sociology. He sees, as it were, merely the rungs of the ladder, and not the supports holding them together.

There would be much to be said for the Liberal point of view if we awoke every morning to find ourselves in a new world, in a world absolutely uninfluenced by what had been said or done, thought or written, on the previous day, the previous year, or the previous generation. The shadowy Liberal programmes and the cloudy national conceptions of the idealogues would be as useless and foolish as they are now; but, as one day, under the Liberal scheme of the universe, would not be influenced by the happenings of the day before it, and would not have part of its attention fixed upon the day after it, such programmes and conceptions would at all events be harmless in their tendencies.

Unfortunately for Liberalism and the shallow philosophical foundations upon which Liberalism

is based, we do not live in such a world. The human race acts on the inherited impulses of millions of years. Every generation is connected with the generation which has gone before and with the generation which is coming after. It is as impossible to escape the past as it is to avoid thinking of the future. Our laws and our religious ceremonies are not the only effects of the former ; insurance companies and the Sinking Fund are not the only provisions for the latter. It would be easy to point to events through the whole course of our outward lives, from the fairy tales we hear in infancy to the precisely similar fairy tales we tell our own children long afterwards, in order to show that the influence of the past is still upon us. But it is even more upon us in our inward lives—in that realm of the sub-conscious which psychologists are only now beginning to investigate. And all this has its effect on the future. We inherit the characteristics of millions of our ancestors and transmit them to our descendants.

It is a matter for wonder how few writers on political science seem to have recognised that the men of one generation do not constitute a "nation." The nation does not include merely the present generation, but all the generations of the past, and, what is more, all the generations

to come. The Liberal, superficial and idealistic, believing that the immutable nature of man is subject to the caprices of change, confines his attention to things of the present. Idealistic, he yet strives to be "practical," regardless of the truth that extremes meet, and that the so-called "practical" men are very often the greatest idealists of all. The Conservative, more faithful to the instincts of his species, combines his interests in the present with love for the past; and when he builds (whether we use the word in its natural or in its figurative meaning), he builds for his own and also for coming generations.

Confining ourselves to our own country for the present, in order to simplify matters, in what form is that tradition manifested in English politics—this tradition that runs like an unending thread from the first generation to the last? It is manifested in the only way possible, in our age-long respect for the hereditary principle—the hereditary principle in connection with the Throne itself, and in connection with the members of the Upper House. With us the hereditary principle is the essence of Conservatism, and this not merely in the political signification of the word. If the nation is to be "conserved," this principle must be maintained, and the nation itself takes precedence of party and party shib-

boleths. Hence the need, under our highly democratic system of government, for a Second Chamber which shall be specially distinguished by the hereditary principle, as opposed to the ephemeral Lower House, which, no matter what party is in power, necessarily gives its attention to the transient subjects of the moment and has no time to devote to a consideration of what is past. The Lower House in Great Britain is almost necessarily anti-national in the higher political sense of the term ; for it does not contain the essential principle of national preservation. Our House of Lords is necessarily national in this one particular; but this is, after all, the most important particular. The comfort of the populace, the pensioning of the poor, the education of the young, the insurance of the workmen : all these are trifling factors as compared with the supreme factor that every nation must first consider—its self-preservation.

One of the most skilful of modern jurists, Señor Antonio Maura, ex-Premier of Spain (and one of the few men who have applied the genius of a creative artist to the subject of political science), has pointed out that the representative principle of government forbids the representation of the entire nation, curious and apparently paradoxical though this statement may appear ;

for, since the nation includes the past and future as well as the present, how can it be "represented" merely by men of the present? This is not a dialectical quibble: it is one of the most luminous contributions to the study of political science made during the nineteenth century. Comte, even, seemed to have an inkling of it, much, presumably, to Mill's disgust;[1] but between the dry abstractions of both Mill and Comte and the clear insight of the experienced Spanish statesman there is an unbridgeable gulf. A Lower House, or a merely elective Upper House, cannot represent the nation. But government in general is as perfectly carried on as it can be in an imperfect world if the concerns of the moment are dealt with by men appointed for the moment to deal with them, subject in all matters to the restriction of hereditary constitutional elements who feel themselves responsible, not merely to the passing show, but to what Burke would call their "matured thoughts" and consciences as "conservers" of the nation.[2]

In England, then, the hereditary principle is necessary to any form of government calling

[1] See his *Système de politique positive*, and Mill's grim comment in ch. iii. of *Utilitarianism*: "I entertain the strongest objections to the system of politics and morals set forth in that treatise."

[2] See his speech at Bristol, Nov. 1774.

itself Conservative. In its essential form it has appealed to the people for centuries. It may not be in favour with the common crowd at all times, but to the common crowd it does not always appeal. The hereditary peers have, or should have, nobler aims ; but these aims, unlike those of the romantic Liberals, are not idealistic, impracticable, and worthless.

V

REPRESENTATION OR DELEGATION?

It is, of course, an exceedingly interesting study to investigate various forms of government, past and present; to analyse them, and on the basis of this analysis to draw up some synthetised proposals and plans. Plato and Ostrogorski, to take two instances, have done this; but both of them, however keen in their analysis—and few will deny that Ostrogorski in particular has analysed certain forms of government in a masterly manner—have failed in their synthesis; failed, indeed, almost ludicrously. On the other hand, Aristotle, Bluntschli, and Heinrich von Gneist are much more cautious, and on the basis of their theories much could be worked out in practice. Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Bentham, and Mill are simply idealists, whose pedantry and romanticism we could not for one moment think of applying to practical affairs in their entirety, though, as

it is, quite a sufficient number of their theories have been applied in part to make future government a much more delicate problem then it might otherwise have been. The Laws of Manu, like the Jewish and Mohammedan theocracy and the Hammurabi Code, stand in a class apart. Their thoroughly practical foundation has easily borne the idealistic superstructure which so many later romanticist writers have endeavoured to erect upon it. But it would be out of the question nowadays to form a social hierarchy in Europe strictly on the Indian pattern.

It will be generally conceded that the world as a whole, apart from Oriental nations, is committed to the principle of representative government. It is true that, for psychological reasons, this principle is much better suited to the phlegmatic and obedient nations of Northern Europe—those Teutons, Anglo-Saxons, and Scandinavians who have overrun North America, Australasia, and South Africa—than to the proud and independent Latins. Even the Latins, however, have adopted the theory of representative government (chiefly as the result of Locke, Rousseau, and the Revolution), no matter how erratic it may sometimes appear in practice among them. In considering new theories of government, then, it may be taken for granted that for many generations to

come we shall have to utilise the principle of representative government as a basis for all our arguments, however distasteful such a principle may be when we compare it with the magnificent social hierarchy established by the Brahmans and maintained by them in a pure form for so many centuries. But when we speak of representative government we must not confuse it with something which, as the result of Mill and Bentham, has almost taken the place of representative government in England to-day, viz. delegation.

"In a democracy," Stendhal once remarked, "men are not weighed, but counted,"—or, as I have already quoted from Ostrogorski, our government is that of an arithmocracy. Stendhal based his remark on politics as he saw them in the early part of the nineteenth century; and he would be perfectly justified in making the same observation if he were living in France or England to-day. But there was an earlier period even in the history of English democracy when men were not counted, but weighed. And real representative government, as I have mentioned in an earlier chapter, can only exist when there is no counting at all.

The principle of government by delegation results logically from Mill's teaching, and we have seen how he believed that its disadvantages

could be overcome by the introduction of proportional representation. This, however, would not have had the intended effect.

If it is only at the present day that we are beginning to observe the evil effects of government by delegation, we must remember that ideas work slowly. The British public in particular is slow to realise the effects of a new principle, whether the principle be political, philosophical, or religious. It is this fact, indeed, that accounts to a very great extent for the contempt for ideas shown by political and journalistic charlatans, who think that a new idea must be absolutely useless if its effects are not seen within twenty-four hours.

It is only at the present day, for instance, that the ideas of men like Bentham, the Philosophic Radicals, and Mill have begun to influence the majority of the people to any great extent. Whether these ideas were originally taken up simply because they were novel, or because people really believed in them, the unfortunate fact remains that they have superseded much better political ideas which had hitherto prevailed in England—ideas which were represented by and typified in Burke. It will be sufficient for me to mention at the outset that the only possible basis of representative government was laid down by

Burke in his speech at Bristol in November 1774, after he had been declared duly elected member for the city. The quotation from this speech which I propose to give is somewhat lengthy, but when its admirable summary of a difficult problem is thoroughly grasped, I do not think the reader will be inclined to grumble. Having formally thanked the electors, Burke passes on to a subject referred to by the other member for Bristol :—

He tells you that "the topic of instructions has occasioned much altercation and uneasiness in this city"; and he expresses himself (if I understand him rightly) in favour of the coercive authority of such instructions.

Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion, high respect; their business, unremitted attention. . . . But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure; no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

My worthy colleague says that his will ought to be

subservient to your opinion. If that be all, the thing is innocent. If government were a matter of will upon any side, yours, without question, ought to be superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and what sort of reason is that, in which the determination precedes the discussion; in which one set of men deliberate and another decide; and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the arguments?

To deliver an opinion is the right of all men; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear, and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But *authoritative* instructions, *mandates* issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience—these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution.

Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests, which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but parliament is a deliberative assembly of *one* nation, with *one* interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed; but when you have chosen him he is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of parliament. If the local constituent should have an interest, or

should form a hasty opinion, evidently opposite to the real good of the rest of the community, the member for that place ought to be as far, as any other, from any endeavour to give it effect.

To be a good member of parliament, is, let me tell you, no easy task. . . . We are now members for a rich commercial city; this city, however, is but a part of a rich commercial nation, the interests of which are various, multiform, and intricate. We are members for that great nation, which, however, is itself but part of a great empire, extended by our virtue and our fortune to the farthest limits of the east and of the west. All these widespread interests must be considered; must be compared; must be reconciled, if possible.[1]

Now, mark what Burke specifically repudiates. He repudiates mere mandates, *i.e.* he repudiates majority government—government by the mere counting of noses. He repudiates the setting of purely local interests above those of the nation as a whole, and he particularly repudiates the suggestion that a member of Parliament is to be ordered about by his constituents as if he were some unthinking slave. The representative of a constituency in Burke's time, and, indeed, to the end of the first generation of the nineteenth century, represented not merely the majority and minority of his own constituency: he likewise represented the nation as a whole.

[1] Burke's *Collected Works* (Bohn), vol. i. 446 foll.

This is, of course, exactly what representative government means. It may not be an ideal form of government, but it is certainly better than the form of government laid down in the principles of the Philosophic Radicals and the Manchester school and Mill. The theory of these thinkers—a theory which, unfortunately, is now being put into practice by the Liberals and even a few of the less intelligent Conservatives—is that the member for any constituency shall represent only the majority in that constituency, not the minority in his constituency, and still less the nation as an entity. Further than that, it is the theory of this school that the member shall surrender himself to his constituents, body and soul. He must not vote in accordance with his own conscience, in accordance with his own matured thoughts, in accordance with what he himself believes to be right; but he must vote in accordance with the "mandate" given by his constituents—not, however, by all his constituents, but by the mere majority of his constituents, even if this majority, as often happens at elections, should be only three or four votes. The Burke theory of government is government by representation; the Mill theory of government is government by delegation.

Now, it is surprising that, in the course of the

recent elections, not a single newspaper, review, or speaker on any side thought of bringing this point to the attention of the public. Far from this, every influential politician, statesman, and leader-writer throughout the country would appear to have absolutely neglected the distinction between the two forms of government. Both Conservative and Liberal newspapers, in the name of representative government, have spoken of "mandates," which, as a moment's reflection should have shown, are in total contradiction to representative government. Elected representatives, while nominally divided over every question brought forward for discussion, form in reality a united parliament, a parliament conscientiously bearing in mind the welfare, not only of the majority and the minority in their constituencies, but of the nation as a whole. Elected delegates, however, are merely an agglomeration of jarring units, not representing even their own constituencies, and the nation itself still less.

This distinction is no mere quibble or trifle. It is the wide gap which separates state government from individualistic government. Conservatives, without giving any particular attention to the matter, have always tended towards Burke rather than towards Mill; but now that

the Liberals, Radicals, Labourites, and Socialists have definitely chosen individualistic government, with all its inevitable disadvantages, it is more than ever the duty of the Tories to combat it. Otherwise, so far as appearances go, we shall henceforth be governed by a series of disjointed units, nominally representatives, and referred to as such by people who do not know the difference, but in reality mere delegates. These delegates will, in theory, " represent " only the " mandate " of the majority of their constituents, though, in practice, they will, of course, " represent " the " mandate " of one of the most disgraceful institutions in the history of politics—the Caucus. It should never be forgotten by students of English politics that the Caucus was, in the first instance, a purely Liberal institution, and, indeed, that it was an institution which inevitably developed out of the Mill philosophy. It was the Caucus, too, which took the first steps towards destroying representative government in England, for, in the early period of its existence, it crushed two real representatives, Mr Joseph Cowen at Newcastle and Mr W. E. Forster at Bradford.

As the Caucus, or some similar institution, was bound to develop out of individualistic politics, and as it proved to be so necessary for the advancement of Liberalism, it is easy to understand

why the Liberals invented and encouraged it; but it is not so easy to forgive the Tories for resisting it so half-heartedly. A few letters in *The Times* and in one or two influential provincial journals, a few indignant public protests, and there the matter ended so far as the Tories were concerned. Not being able to resist the Liberal Caucus, they formed Tory Caucuses; but the disease was not amenable to this homœopathic treatment. Mill's fears, indeed, were thoroughly realised: both parties had become tainted by the presence in them of purely professional politicians, and with the introduction of the Caucus the professional politician gradually became paramount. Our present machine-made political system dates from the introduction of the Caucus also; and it is Caucus officials who have largely been responsible for the degradation of politics by the impetus they gave to the wide circulation of misleading leaflets, the use of garish posters, and the employment of country "missionaries," claptrap street-corner speakers, and gramophones.

The greatest blot on the Caucus, however, is of course the destruction of truly representative government to which it inevitably led, a matter to which I have referred at greater length in a succeeding chapter; and the Conservatives cannot escape a share of the blame for having helped

towards the realisation of such a state of affairs, if only through their apathy. The majority of them, it is to be feared, were too dull to appreciate the new political weapon, or to divine what its effects would be. Those who did, it would seem, were the bolder spirits who utilised their talents, not for combating the Caucus, but for forming Caucuses in opposition to it. Of real, whole-hearted opposition there was scarcely a trace. The professional politicians had conquered.

VI

LIBERALISM AT WORK

As we have seen, the harmony of the English social order was gradually disturbed during the eighteenth century, first by the effects of the individualistic philosophy of the Locke school, and, secondly, by the great increase in trade and the employment of machinery from about 1760 onwards. The Dissenters, however, were still excluded from all political power, and the distribution of seats in the House of Commons was such that the large manufacturing towns found themselves practically deprived of parliamentary representation, although small rural districts could show plenty of pocket boroughs which were naturally utilised by the landed gentry.

These pocket boroughs, of course, were privileges ; and they were of special benefit to titled landowners, who, through them, could practically nominate their own chosen representatives for the House of Commons. It is, of course, the

fashion for individualistic philosophers (*i.e.* the Liberals and Radicals) to rail at all such privileges, but it must be pointed out that the tendency of modern Continental philosophy is in the direction of justifying privileges in certain circumstances. A well-known German writer, Mr Oscar A. H. Schmitz, shows, for example, in the best book he has yet written (*Die Kunst der Politik*), that there are reactionary privileges and progressive privileges. A statement like this will naturally sound appalling to the hard-shell individualists, the Mills and the Benthams and the Hobhouses, who would appear to look upon privileges of any kind as the mark of the beast. But here, as elsewhere, the advance of modern thought is leaving the Liberals hopelessly in the rear. If any privilege protects the superior man from the philistines, whether politically, socially, artistically, or otherwise, then it has a complete *raison d'être*.

Indeed, as the writer just referred to also points out, voting in England has itself always been regarded as a privilege and not as a right; and this is one factor, one principle of Toryism, still remaining in English politics, which distinguishes our political system from that which is based on the degrading doctrines of the French Revolutionists. There are no such things as "rights of man" based on an undefined "law

of nature," and hence no man has a right to vote, but simply the privilege of voting—a privilege which, of course, cannot be seized from below, but must be conferred from above. Schmitz has, with keen insight, referred to the moral effect of this distinction on the voter, particularly the working man. "The franchise," he says, "has quite a different effect on the workman when he looks upon it as a privilege in reward of his abilities, as a kind of ennoblement, from that which it would exercise upon his mind if he imagined that this right were conferred on him merely on account of his status as a unit of the human race, without any other factors being taken into account. In the first case, the workman is elevated to the higher level of men who are politically mature; in the second case, politics is degraded to the level of the mob."

There is no arguing over a statement like this. The modern student of political science will appreciate its force at once; the mere individualist may live till doomsday without realising its importance.

The immediate result of the great increase in trade already referred to, however, was to call privileges in question, particularly the privilege of voting. The traders and merchants acquired a certain amount of real, if not theoretical power; for their fortunes soon equalled those of many

noble and landowning families. But the merchants and manufacturers were not satisfied with the possession of money: they wanted political power for the furtherance of their commercial schemes, and they wanted a status in society. They found themselves naturally opposed to the governing classes, that is to say, the classes interested in the land. They, therefore, as naturally became supporters of the Whigs, who were steadily acting as the champions of the cause of the Dissenters against the "tyranny" of the Established Church (*i.e.* the "High" or practically Roman Catholic branch of the Church of England). The trading classes being for the most part Dissenters or Low Churchmen, the result was that two sections were pitted against two sections: the merchants against the landed gentry and the Dissenters against the Established Church—a distinction which, despite the many changes in our politics and the social condition of the country, is substantially the same to-day, though superficial appearances will naturally deceive the superficial student.

From the day of the decisive defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, it was clear that the commercial supremacy of England was assured. As compared with the weak and exhausted nations of the Continent, England was undoubtedly not

only the workshop of the world, but the carrier and middleman of the world into the bargain. The impulse given to trade, and the consequent rapid increase in the fortunes of the trading families, naturally made the call for parliamentary reform louder and more persistent than ever before. The result was the Reform Bill of 1832, which extended the franchise to those who had agitated for it, *i.e.* the middle classes. It is needless to add that it was these same middle classes which were interested in trade and not in land, and that they have ever since taken advantage of their parliamentary privileges to shift taxation from themselves as much as possible, placing it instead on the shoulders of the other classes, viz. the aristocratic and the working classes, chiefly the latter. This is a trait which does not characterise merely the Liberals of the present day, as it likewise characterised their predecessors of 1832 : it was also a characteristic of the Puritans, who knew what they were about when it came to financial dealings. Even J. R. Green, in those chapters of his *Short History of the English People* which deal with the Puritan Revolution, has unwittingly borne testimony to this trait in the Low Church fanatics ; and Disraeli has summed the matter up concisely in one of his novels :—

Here, too [*i.e.* Westminster Abbey], a virtuous and able monarch was martyred, because, among other benefits projected for his people, he was of opinion that it was more for their advantage that the economic service of the state should be supplied by direct taxation levied by an individual known to all, than by indirect taxation, raised by an irresponsible and fluctuating assembly. But, thanks to parliamentary patriotism, the people of England were saved from ship-money, which money the wealthy paid, and only got in its stead the customs and excise, which the poor mainly supply.[1]

It may be urged that at any rate the Puritans were sincere, and that this is more than can be said of the party leaders of modern times. But the fact remains that the rise of Puritanism meant the rise of the bourgeoisie, and the rise of the bourgeoisie meant the oppression and impoverishment of the poor. The aristocracy, in this respect, was restrained by its traditions and its ideals; but the bourgeoisie knows neither tradition nor ideal. The extended use of machine power, too, had naturally affected the position of the workmen, and it is here that we must look for the source of those social problems which are causing so much anxiety to statesmen and thinkers generally at the present day. It cannot be denied by anyone who examines the facts impartially that it was better for the workmen

[1] *Sybil*, ch. vi.

to be on the land under the feudal system than in the town under the commercial system. In the one case the personal relationship between the serf and his lord had a beneficial effect on the social life of the inferior which he has never since experienced from the manufacturer. Under the feudal system it is true that the inferior had no "individual rights," but it was much better for himself, for society, and for the state, that he should form part of a group, just as the skilled workmen formed part of guilds, than that he should have become isolated as an "individual," receiving "liberties" in theory and finding that "liberty" is denied to him in practice.

Why, then, should the working classes—why, indeed, should voters in general—find themselves with less liberty now, after so many "democratic" measures and various Reform Bills, than in former times? The reason does not lie on the surface; but a closer investigation than is usually given to the philosophy of Radicalism will show why. In former times, the interest of the nation was held to be superior to the interest of political parties; but the voice of the nation as a whole could be heard. Voters were, in the first place, considerably fewer in number; and, in the second place, each of them, as one result of the feudal system, spoke not merely for him-

self but for his dependents. Under an individualistic system of government, however, the individual himself, as even Mill foresaw, was completely lost in the crowd. It was no longer possible for the nation to speak in a decided tone : in the first place, because the doctrines of Bentham and his school took away the nation and left us instead with a collection of individual atoms ; and, in the second place, because those atoms had no leaders. With the sweeping away of the feudal spirit and the spread of the dissenting spirit, there was a corresponding decline in the influence of the landowning families.

The extent of this declining influence, and the effects to which it led, can be properly appreciated only by a long study of the more ephemeral writings — novels, "broadsheets," newspapers, minor poems, caricatures, etc. — of the period between, say, 1770 and 1830. The student of modern political science can hardly be expected to go to the trouble which I myself have taken to feel the psychological pulse of England between the years mentioned ; but, if he takes some interest in the theological side of his subject, he will be fairly well repaid by a perusal of two essays on Methodism contributed by Sidney Smith to the *Edinburgh Review* in 1808 and 1809, and usually included in the collected

editions of the works of that remarkable clergyman. The psychologist, too, will glean much information from a comparison of the characters in the novels of Richardson, Fanny Burney, Jane Austen, and Dickens, in which the influence of the aristocracy is seen to descend by regular steps. The entire conflict, of course, may be said to be thrashed out in the novels of Disraeli, especially in *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and *Tancred*.

When the natural leaders of the people had gradually disappeared, however, it became necessary, in order to avoid absolute anarchy, to fill their places. As the uncontrolled units comprising the "people" could do nothing to help themselves, control had once more to be superimposed, and the unsettled state of politics between 1830 and 1880 is largely accounted for when we survey the attempts made to provide for that control which was gradually slipping out of the hands of the aristocracy and the landed gentry. Once again the student will have to examine very deeply into the state of England at this time before the events of the period become clear; but with the assistance of the biographies of the leading statesmen, supplemented by the aid of that ephemeral literature of which I have already spoken (psychological insight, which is somewhat rare, being taken for

granted), the complicated panorama will gradually become unfolded. It will be sufficient for the purposes of the busy reader to state simply that about 1880 the remaining vestiges of feudal control were supplanted by the Caucus ; but the influence exercised by the Caucus was very different from that which had been exercised for so many generations by the landed gentry and the nobility. The Caucus, however, represents Liberalism in practice, and it accordingly calls for some little comment. To understand its baneful effects, let us first hear a Liberal authority, Professor Hobhouse, on the principle of democratic government :—

This principle makes one very large assumption. It postulates the existence of a common will. It assumes that the individuals whom it would enfranchise can enter into the common life and contribute to the formation of a common decision by a genuine interest in public transactions. Where and in so far as this assumption definitely fails, there is no case for democracy. Progress, in such a case, is not wholly impossible, but it must depend on the number of those who do care for the things that are of social value, who advance knowledge, or " civilise life through the discoveries of art," or form a narrow but effective public opinion in support of liberty and order. We may go further. Whatever the form of government, progress always does, in fact, depend on those who so think and

live, and on the degree in which these common interests envelop their life and thought.[1]

Admissions like these, coming as they do from an authoritative source, are of the greatest importance; for, on Professor Hobhouse's own postulates and assumptions, democratic government is dead. It is impossible for any "will" to arise among the "people"; for a "will" implies leadership, something imposed from above, and not something urged from below. It is the fundamental error of Liberalism to suppose that the common crowd, a variegated collection of average men, can possess a common will at all, much less impose this will upon those who are responsible for the government of the country.

This was a factor in the psychology of Radicalism which early became clear to Mr Schnadhorst and to Mr Joseph Chamberlain, and the result was the founding of the famous Birmingham Caucus. The Caucus, whatever its aims may have appeared to be even to its organisers, was not so much an attempt to direct the popular vote as an attempt to impose a "will" where there was none in existence. The immediate effects of the Caucus were to check real democracy (*i.e.* representative government), whenever demo-

[1] *Liberalism* (Williams & Norgate), pp. 229–230.

cracy in its more genuine form interfered with the principles of government by delegation. It should have been clear to all politicians that, when Mr Cowen was compelled to yield to the Caucus at Newcastle and when Mr Forster was compelled to yield to it at Bradford, representative government was going by the board. But it was not clear to politicians then, and it is not clear to very many of them even now ; because Englishmen in general, despising ideas, despising abstract thought of a helpful tendency (such as that to be found among the Indian and Chinese philosophers), and despising new principles of all kinds until they have slowly and painfully permeated the public mind, saw nothing in the operations of the Caucus but a merely local election dispute about " tactics " or something.

Far from exercising a purely local influence, however, the Caucuses gradually came to exercise a profoundly national influence. The National Liberal Federation and the National Union of Conservative Associations may be adequately described as the National Unions of Caucuses ; for, as I have mentioned in Chapter V., when the excellent electioneering results achieved by the Liberal Caucus were seen, the Conservatives thought themselves compelled in self-defence to organise similar bodies in opposition. In time,

however, the "Central Office" of these bodies became responsible not merely for electioneering tactics and the distribution of posters and pamphlets, but for the entire policy of its particular party and the control of the party funds. Everyone who is at all familiar with the inner side of English politics knows perfectly well that not a single political principle ever originates among the "people," and that the "people" are not responsible for the "mandates" which they are alleged to have given. The policy of a party is laid down by the small body of men controlling the Central Office, and it is not based upon the wishes, real or supposed, of the "people." It is based rather upon what, the officials believe, will prove to be a good election cry—not, of course, something beneficial for the nation as a whole, but good "window dressing" for the particular party which is supposed to "represent" the wishes of, roughly speaking, half the country.

Unfortunately, these officials are never men who, to use Professor Hobhouse's words, "care for the things that are of social value." In the case of the Liberal party, for example, in so far as one may judge by results, they are men of unusually superficial minds, scrappy readings, and insular prejudices. Poor psychologists, cranky faddists,

their insight into the soul of the nation is practically nil. Their knowledge of political science, ancient or modern, would not make the whole body of them equal to a man like Hanotaux. Question them, and in nine cases out of ten you will find that they do not know anything of, say, so common a book as Aristotle's *Politics*; or of the political writings of men like Burke, von Gneist, Bluntschli, Redlich, or Ostrogorski. Their political reading would appear to have been confined to Tom Paine, Bentham, Mill, and Cobden's speeches, interspersed with scraps of Carlyle, and, in rarer cases, of Ruskin also.

It is a body like this which is responsible for bringing opprobrium upon Liberalism, and rightly. Does anyone in his senses imagine, for example, that the English "people" ardently desired and gave "mandates" for the three or four Education Bills introduced by the Liberal Government from 1906 onwards? Or for the ridiculous Licensing Bill, which was introduced merely to please the temperance faddists, the mineral-water manufacturers, and the great cocoa firms? Or for the famous 1909 Budget, which, while professedly penalising the employer and the capitalist, was designed to penalise the working classes and the landowners in favour of the capitalist? Or for the recently introduced

Insurance Bill, which will not only fail in its intended effect, but will penalise the working classes still more in doing so ? Of course not. Far from being desired by the English " people," these measures were one and all drawn up at the Central Office under the supervision of the party leaders, and then imposed upon the party as a whole, and on every election candidate of the party throughout the country. The daily Press, in close touch as it is with the party leaders, never hesitates to back up any policy thus laid down and to proclaim it to the world as the " will of the people."

It is only just to say that like strictures apply to the Conservative Central Office officials, *i.e.* the Conservative Caucus. They, too, appear to be incapable of divining the needs and wishes of the nation. They do not regard it as their function to suggest useful and beneficent legislative measures, but rather to suggest skilful electioneering tactics by means of which the Radicals may be dished and the Socialists kept down. In short, the evil which Burke plainly saw and referred to in his celebrated Bristol speech has come about. Neither the Government nor the Opposition has the interests of the nation at heart. The pernicious doctrine of individualism has resulted in a nation which is gradually crumbling into

separate particles, each particle looking after itself. These units are "represented" in Parliament by a series of delegates, each delegate not responsible to his own conscience, and, as Burke has said, not relying upon his own matured thoughts, but instead faithfully following a "mandate," ostensibly a "mandate" of the people, but in practice a "mandate" drawn up by men connected with the Caucus whom it would be doing too much honour to call superficial thinkers.

This is no very dignified position to be occupied by the nation which has always boasted with such pride that it evolved the Mother of Parliaments. But it was inevitably destined to occupy such a position when once it accepted, even in part, the principles of the individualistic philosophy. A nation of individuals would evolve nothing but anarchy unless some unusually strong form of control was applied. The Caucus was an inevitable development; "vote as you are told" became an inevitable principle of the new régime. In theory, "Liberty" was widespread throughout the land when the middle classes seized upon the principles of Paine, Priestley, and Bentham; in practice, the liberties of the people, so far as their voting influence was concerned, were never more rigorously restrained and circumscribed

than they have been since the introduction of philosophic Radicalism—and the Caucus.

It may be argued that the Caucus acts as a substitute for the feudal system in that it supplies a "will" for the common crowd. This excuse, however, will not bear examination. In the first place, the feudal barons, or any landowner who may have acted in an analogous capacity, were in personal touch with even their most inferior serfs, and this is a statement which cannot, by any stretch of the language, be applied to the members of the Caucuses, and not even to the modern capitalistic employer, whose development has been so admirably aided by Liberal legislation. As I have taken the liberty of indicating above, the men connected with the Caucus are by no means remarkable for their knowledge or their perspicacity, and they cannot for one moment be compared with the feudal lords.

In the second place, while the feudal lord supplied the initiative, or "will," that will was subject in practice to restrictions on the part of those who, in theory, occupied a much lower position in the social hierarchy. The mediæval baron could not ride rough-shod over his knights and esquires, nor was the voice of the serf raised in vain. It requires, I may say in passing, a

considerable study of our rural population to grasp how much of this spirit still remains, a spirit which can hardly be appreciated by town dwellers at all. When Disraeli spoke, in *Sybil*, of " the two nations," he referred to the rich and the poor. A modern sociological novelist might find much interesting material in investigating the case of two other nations, also living side by side, and unacquainted with one another : the country dwellers and the town dwellers. In the fundamental things of life, in outlook and sympathies, they are poles apart.

When we come to examine the Caucus, however, we find that there is no control over it at all. Its members, crude and superficial, not only select measures like the ill-constructed Insurance Bill, but they have, in addition, let it be repeated, absolutely unlimited power to impose such measures on the party and to make the party fight its battles on them. The " common will " of which Professor Hobhouse speaks is never thought of for a moment. In a jointly written book, Mr Hilaire Belloc and Mr Cecil Chesterton have concisely and accurately summed up the position and effects of the Caucus :—

> What is the Central Office ? It is not representative of the people. It is not even representative of the active members of the party. . . . The Central Office is the

medium of communication between the governing group on the Front Bench and the local party organisations throughout the country. These local organisations themselves do not represent very adequately the rank and file of the parties; they are composed of the most enthusiastic partisans (a small proportion of the community), and are largely dominated by the local rich men who help to keep them going These men often covet seats in Parliament and work the local organisation with the object of obtaining them. Yet, unrepresentative as they often are, and controlled by the local plutocracy, the local organisations are too democratic to be trusted under such a system as ours with the reality of political power. The Central Office exists to keep them in order.

At the head of the Central Office is an official nominated by the governing group. He is in close touch with the whips, and, through them, with the Leader. He wisely leaves a certain amount of discretion to the local organisations in things not essential. But, where his intervention is required, as, for example, where a local organisation is disposed to stand by a man who takes an independent attitude, or where a man unacceptable to the Front Bench is nominated, he interferes, and his interference is usually successful, for in truth his power, though hidden, is immense. For he holds the purse strings.[1] . . .

Only three types of men find it normally possible to get into Parliament. First, local rich men who can dominate the local political organisation. Secondly,

[1] *The Party System*, by H. Belloc and C. Chesterton, p. 120.

rich men from outside who have suborned the central political organisation. Thirdly, comparatively poor men who are willing, in consideration of a seat in Parliament, and the chances of material gain which it offers, to become the obedient and submissive servants of the Caucus.[1] . . .

If the selection of members has, of course, been taken completely out of the hands of the people, quite equally so has been the selection of the " programme " of which they are supposed to ask the electors' approval, but which, as a fact, official candidates must depend on as a brief. . . . Two programmes are drawn up by the politicians, usually after consultation with each other, and between those two alone are the voters asked to choose. No subject not mentioned in either programme, however much the people may desire to raise it, can be effectually raised. No solution of any problem, except the two prescribed solutions, however much the people might prefer it, can ever be really discussed. Nothing is left to the people but to choose the least of two evils. It is true that in framing these programmes the politicians have their eyes on votes. But the vote-catching of politicians is a matter of arbitrary arrangement; it has nothing to do with any national demand.[2]

NOTE.—The reader who would like to know something more about the Caucus will do well to study Ostrogorski's *Democracy and the Organisation of Political Parties*, vol. i. pt. ii. chs. i. to ix., and vol. i. pt. iii. chs. i.

[1] *The Party System*, by H. Belloc and C. Chesterton, p. 125.
[2] *Ib.*, pp. 133–134.

ii. and iii. In pt. ii. ch. iv., Ostrogorski gives a comprehensive list of review and newspaper articles concerning the beginnings of the Caucus.

Liberalism having thus disposed of the "common will" by means of the Caucus, let us inquire further how it acts in practice.

Much of the unctuous rectitude of the modern Liberal is attributable to the fact that the members of his party have always given themselves out to be the friends of the working man. Skilfully written pamphlets and unscrupulous Press campaigns have for years led the working-class population of the country to believe that the Conservatives are allied with the capitalistic interests, that the Conservatives represent land, wealth, and privilege, things which are generally thought to be anathema to the true Liberal. The Tories, it has always been urged, have invariably endeavoured to obstruct any legislation tending to benefit the workman, while facilitating as much as possible any measures calculated to maintain and improve the position of the capitalist. This, however, is in direct contradiction to what has actually happened, and even to what appears to be happening now. Far from endeavouring to tax the capitalist for the benefit of the poor, the whole aim of the Liberal policy, conscious or unconscious, has been

to tax the poor for the benefit of the capitalist. Will this be denied by anyone who has closely followed the progress and activities of the Liberal party ?

In connection with the agitation over the 1832 Reform Bill, it was the avowed object of the Whigs, the political fathers of the modern Liberals, to open the House of Commons to the representatives of trade. Up to that time the House had represented chiefly the landed gentry. Henceforth it was more and more to represent the commercial element, *i.e.* the capitalists. The power, wealth, and influence of the landowners were still in evidence ; but a counter-influence now appeared, the influence of the merchants. Generally speaking, the landed interests continue to be represented in the House of Commons by the Conservative members, the capitalists by the Liberals. The strenuous opposition of stalwart Radicals like Cobden and Bright to the Factory Acts, and the bitterness with which Liberal members in general continue to fight against legislation for the benefit of the workmen, are classical examples of the tenderness with which this party has always treated the capitalists, though from the latter part of the nineteenth century up to the present time Liberal sympathisers in the Press, on the platform and in the

pulpit, have endeavoured to make it appear that the Conservatives are the incarnation of the greed of gain: the jealous guardians of the sweaters.

It must not, of course, be assumed that recent Liberal legislation, such as the famous 1909 Budget, attacked the capitalists in any way—the party, presumably, was too 'cute for that. Whatever may have been the ultimate purpose of this Budget, its effect has been to despoil the workman in favour of the employer; and, when we compare this fact with the Liberal opposition to labour legislation in the past, we naturally become suspicious. It is true that the South African war had some effect in unsettling the labour market for a time, and about the year 1900 Trade Union agitation calmed down as the result of the return of a few Labour members to Parliament. But from 1906 onwards, when the Liberals came into power, and even more particularly from 1909, wages have decreased out of all proportion to profits and the increased cost of living.[1] The famous Budget, while ostensibly intended to put more money into the pockets of the working men, appears to the unprejudiced observer to have been intended to

[1] See Mr L. G. Chiozza Money's *Riches and Poverty* (1910), *passim*, but especially chs. ix. and xxi.

perform this gratifying service for the capitalist, which, indeed, statistics show it has done to a nicety. The capitalist, in short, can always manipulate wages in such a manner as to recoup himself for any loss that Liberal legislation may nominally make him suffer. This hard fact is not known to our academic writers on economics; but it can be found out by any one who will take the trouble to examine statistics with more than superficial care. And it is certainly known to the working classes; for it is they who suffer.

This instance of the Budget, indeed, is not the only one. On one occasion the Liberal Government voted £200,000 to relieve the working classes during a period of distress. It turned out that, in those districts where the money was distributed, wages showed a decided tendency to fall, and actually did fall, while in other districts, where the money was not distributed, wages maintained their level—in other words, capitalists in particular districts recouped capitalists in general, out of the wages of the workmen, for money which had been taken from the nation in general. If I wished to burden the reader with rows of figures, these instances and others like them could be fully proved; and no student of economics could pretend that they were for-

tuitous. Just look at the names of a few representative capitalists and large employers, all of whom openly profess Liberal or Radical principles: Lord Cowdray (Sir Weetman Pearson), Lord Pirrie (of Harland & Wolff's), Lord Furness (Sir Christopher Furness), Mr D. A. Thomas (the mine-owner), Sir Alfred Mond and Sir John Brunner, of Brunner, Mond & Co., Mr Lever (Port Sunlight), and Mr Fels; not to mention the great cocoa firms, such as the Cadburys and the Frys; the recently deceased Lord Airedale (Sir James Kitson), owner of iron-works, and Lord Joicey (Sir James Joicey), another mine-owner. And again, when the shipping strike dislocated the country's trade in the summer of 1911, people learnt with some surprise that practically all the large ship-owners were whole-hearted supporters of the Liberal Government.

But the interests of commerce and capitalism, as represented by the Liberals, and of a section of the workmen, as represented by the Labour party, are trifling as compared with the interests of the nation as a whole. To represent the whole nation, the nation considered as an entity, is the task of the Conservatives; it remains for them to examine the fundamental principles of their political

philosophy as exemplified in Burke, and to act accordingly.[1]

It must again be emphasised, however, that the Conservatives cannot do this until they show more respect for ideas and their sources. I have already had occasion to make use of an Eastern simile in this connection.[2] When young and unreasoning children see trees shaken by the wind, they forget, as a rule, that the wind has anything to do with it, and forthwith jump to the conclusion that the trees are shaking of their own accord. The wind is invisible, and, as it cannot be seen actually working, its effects are thought to be due to some other and more superficial cause.

The old Hindu comparison was never more applicable than to the Unionist party at the present time and its attitude towards ideas. Ideas are the powerful influence underlying all

[1] I have already quoted the relevant passage from Burke (ch. v.). It is interesting to compare with this a letter written by Macaulay to the chairman of the Leeds election committee on August 3, 1832, the period of transition between representation and delegation. In the course of some remarks on canvassing, Macaulay says: "To request an honest man to vote according to his conscience is superfluous. To request him to vote against his conscience is an insult. . . . In this letter, and in every letter which I have written to my friends at Leeds, I have plainly declared my *opinions*. But I think it, at this conjuncture, my duty to declare that I will give no *pledges*" (Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*, ch. v.).

[2] *The New Age*, June 15, 1911.

political action: the whole foundation upon which political action is built. Their effects are manifest to thinkers whose brains have been developed (and incidentally cleared) by modern philosophy. But, as the ideas themselves cannot be seen, we have recently been confronted with the sad spectacle of Conservative leaders acting like a pack of children, vainly endeavouring to explain the cause of their three successive defeats, and equally vainly endeavouring to formulate a new policy which might enable them to return to power. This inability on the part of the Conservative leaders to grasp the importance of ideas is one of the most significant and (to enlightened Conservatives) depressing factors of the present political situation. It indicates that these leaders completely misconceive their position, for, until they can thoroughly understand where the main strength of the Radical position lies, their own will every day become worse.

The cursory and superficial interest now taken by the English upper classes in literature and philosophy is, it is to be feared, a typical indication of the inability of the average Conservative to estimate the influence of authors and their ideas on the public. This stand-offish attitude is, to put it mildly, inadvisable. I have heard foreign critics of our institutions refer to it as

deplorably stupid, and cite it as a proof of the slow and unscientific English mind.

To the observer with some intelligence, indeed, it is simply appalling to be obliged to consider the non-intelligence of a great party. I have heard the three successive Conservative defeats attributed to all sorts of causes—lack of organisation, lack of party funds, lack of convincing speakers, lack of agitators, unscrupulous opponents, the large supplies of Liberal leaflets, bad trade, Unionist wobbling on the Home Rule question, the cartoons by Mr Arthur Moreland and Sir F. C. Gould. But all these things are of small consequence as compared with the real cause, lack of ideas. Of what use is a stump speaker when he has nothing new to say? Of what use is an agitator when he has nothing to agitate about? Where cartoonists are concerned, again, the Liberals are much better off than the Conservatives. The real cartoonist is an artist: he must have the imagination of an artist; and artists, taking the word in its widest sense, are not encouraged in the Conservative party. The Conservative party, in other words, turns out of its ranks the only men who can eventually save it. If, for instance, the Conservatives as a whole had been gifted with ideas, they would long ago have repudiated the Liberal catchwords about

the Tories being the upholders of the capitalistic system. The interests of the Conservatives lie in the land, and the land has nothing to do with capitalism. The interests of the Liberals lie with the manufacturers and traders ; and the interests of manufacturers and traders are necessarily bound up with capitalism, sweating, and the exploitation of the workmen. (What has any Liberal Government ever done towards abolishing sweating ?) Until this elementary doctrine of modern economics is thoroughly realised, the nation can make but little progress in the direction of social or administrative improvement.

If further proof is sought, both of the Tory party's lack of ideas and the Liberal party's dependence on the industrialists, it will be sufficient to consider the ultimate effects of the Insurance Bill. This Bill is deliberately aimed at the only organisations which now stand between the workman and the capitalist, viz. the Trade Unions. The " benefits " which it is alleged the workman will secure are compulsory upon him : he must be a humble unit in the State insurance company whether he likes it or not. The scheme, again, is contributory : the workman must pay his few pence a week. In practice, however, it will be found that the employer's contribution will also come out of the

workman's pocket; and the State contribution will also fall heavily upon the workman.

Eventually, then, the workman will find himself too poor to continue his subscriptions to two organisations. The sick and unemployment benefits which he now receives from his Trade Union being in future paid by the State, and the State scheme being compulsory, the great majority of workmen will find it necessary to discontinue their subscriptions to their Union and confine themselves to the State scheme.

As the Insurance Bill, however, is drawn up to favour the capitalists, there is naturally one thing of which it does not make a feature, and in this it differs entirely from the Trade Union schemes: there is no provision for strike pay. When the workman strikes, his benefit ceases. There will be no protective power between the workman and the capitalist who exploits him.

I write, it is true, before the Insurance Bill has been definitely passed, or even properly discussed in the House of Commons. But this example is nevertheless highly instructive as indicating the modern trend of Liberal legislation and its effect on the working man.

Naturally, the Government will propose some other means of settling disputes than strikes. The sliding scale of wages in collieries, and the

Conciliation Boards in connection with the railways, are mere palliatives to make the workmen believe that they have no excuse for "downing tools" when there are more peaceful methods of settling disputes. Nevertheless, the experience of the railway men from 1907 to 1911 showed the futility of Conciliation Boards; and the "sliding scale" plan has not obviated colliery disputes. In spite of this, it is evident that the latest Liberal philosophy finds a place for what is generally known as compulsory arbitration.

Need it be said, however, that compulsory arbitration is but a contradiction in terms? In theory it may sound all right to say that the general life of the community must not be disturbed, and that employers and workmen must meet and endeavour to settle their disputes amicably, availing themselves for the purpose of the facilities offered by the Government. But it must not be forgotten that, although this principle may be new in England, it has already been tried in Australia, and with very indifferent success. The exasperation produced among the railway men by the working of the Conciliation Boards is no greater than the exasperation produced among employers and men in Australia by the attempt, for example, on the part of the New South Wales Legislature to regulate industries.

The New South Wales Government established a Court of Arbitration, and an Act was passed providing for the fining or imprisonment of workmen who should strike before allowing the Court a reasonable time in which to consider the dispute. In 1902, nevertheless, a strike was declared by the Australian Workers' Union, and in 1903 there was a colliery strike. In neither case could the law be put in motion. It is a difficult matter to force the outcome of compulsory "arbitration" on twenty thousand determined men, and it is an equally difficult matter to arrest such men, or even their leaders.

This experience might have served as a warning in regard to compulsory arbitration, but the New South Wales Government nevertheless passed an Amending Act. This, however, proved to be as useless as the original measure. Strikes went on as merrily as before, and in every case the powerful Trade Unions showed themselves to be easily the masters of the Government.

New Zealand has also experimented with compulsory arbitration and minimum wage schemes, but the results have been unsatisfactory. So far back as 1908, indeed, Mr D. Shackleton, a Labour M.P. of some authority, uttered a warning against compulsory arbitration when presiding at the Trade Unions Congress at Nottingham: "Com-

pulsory arbitration may carry us much further than we wish to go. Trade Unions have spent a half-century in securing the removal of restrictions upon their liberty of action ; let them be careful now not to re-impose them."

When considering the failure of Conciliation Boards and analogous schemes, however, no Conservative writer or speaker should omit mention of their origin. It cannot be sufficiently emphasised that the Liberals and Radicals have for thirty years or more been influenced in their political propaganda by the persuasive theories of superficial thinkers. The practical statesman must admit that even John Stuart Mill comes under this head. Anyone who is acquainted with the present economical and sociological situation in England—but how few are !—knows that the present unrest among the working classes is the result of a long propaganda carried on by societies which the average Unionist is too much in the habit of neglecting. If Mr Lloyd George's various schemes be compared, point by point and detail by detail, with the leaflets and essays written by the highly non-practical members of, say, the Fabian Society from 1884 onwards, the result might tend to startle the average Conservative, who wonders who puts "these ideas" into the heads of the working men. It cannot be too

earnestly pointed out that no man is competent to discuss the present economical position of the country who is not familiar with the propaganda of the intellectual Socialists during the last twenty-five years, or who is not provided with counter-arguments wherewith to upset the theories of these idealistic thinkers.

When considering the effects of compulsory arbitration in our colonies, however, it must not be forgotten that the workmen were able to secure better terms from their employers only because they had the support of their Trade Unions. As I have already pointed out, however, the effect of Mr Lloyd George's Insurance Bill will be to wreck the Trade Unions in England. If the Liberal interpretation of Mr Webb's schemes is put into effect, then we shall in a few years' time find most of the British workmen completely at the mercy of the capitalistic interests. They will have to take whatever may be awarded to them as the result of compulsory arbitration, and during periods of slack trade they will presumably he herded in Mr Webb's Labour Colonies.

We have considered the nineteenth-century philosophy of Liberalism, then, and we see its effect on the working classes. But what censure can be too severe for the Conservative leaders

in this connection ? Either they have been too short-sighted to perceive what the ultimate effects of the Liberal philosophy would be, or they had not the moral courage to protest against it. Let me say once more that the fundamental basis of Conservatism is the land and not capital, and that the Conservative party as a whole should never have allowed itself to become allied with capitalism as the result of a skilful Liberal press and pulpit campaign.

VII

COUNTER MOVEMENTS

It would not be entirely correct to say that the new individualistic philosophy spread over Great Britain without a counteracting movement in favour of the system which it was gradually displacing. There were several such counter-efforts, the three chief being the Oxford movement (about 1833–45), the Young England movement (about 1837–46), and the Christian Socialist movement (about 1848–53). The Oxford movement, led by men like Newman, Pusey, and Keble, was in essence an attempt to make more manifest the principles which, openly exhibited in the Church of Rome, were to a great extent dormant in the Church of England: that combination of democracy and aristocracy which is almost peculiar, indeed, to the Roman Church. The men at the head of the Oxford movement endeavoured to substitute an appeal to the feelings and sentiment for an appeal to reason. They

recognised the truth which Disraeli summed up in one of his novels in the phrase that " a man is only truly great when he acts from the passions " ; and in consequence they endeavoured to rescue the adherents of the Church of England from the secularising influence of reason, interposing an elaborate ritual and the authority of the priesthood between the laymen and the Supreme Being.

It is not necessary for us to examine the detailed history of this movement : its broad results are interesting as showing what happened when, after an interval of many decades, it was sought to re-establish hierarchical principles and to do away with the " individual." The strange doctrines of the Tractarians, as they were called, provoked a storm of discussion, and practically split the Church. Some—the High Church party —sided with the leaders of the Oxford movement ; others—the Low Church party—denounced them as heretics. The agitation had very little tangible political outcome ; but it did make clear to a few sections of the nation where the doctrines of the individualists would ultimately lead them.

Hardly had the Oxford movement properly begun when the " Young England " movement started. The rather idealistic young men who formed the new party of that name were headed

by Disraeli, who devoted his earlier novels to expounding his views on the society, or rather the sociology, of the time. He held that the Whigs had turned the King into a Doge for political purposes, thus separating the sovereign from the people. The "multitude," too, another great factor in English history, had been swept out of existence and replaced by "individuals." It was the aim of the Young England party to revive the old feudal feeling, to bring landlords and peasants together again, and to teach the wealthy that they had many duties as well as rights. But even this movement led to no particularly noteworthy result; and when Disraeli himself came into power he was forced to sacrifice many of his favourite theories, and, one might go so far as to say, even many of his principles, to the political exigencies of the time.

For this we cannot altogether blame Disraeli. He was, above all, a Tory Democrat, as witness his speech at a Mansion House dinner in September 1867 :—

For what is the Tory party unless it represents national feeling? If it does not represent national feeling, Toryism is nothing. It does not depend upon hereditary coteries of exclusive nobles. It does not attempt power by attracting to itself the spurious force which may accidentally arise from advocating cosmo-

politan principles, or talking cosmopolitan jargon. The Tory party is nothing unless it represents and upholds the institutions of the country. For what are the institutions of the country? They are entirely in theory, and ought to be, as I am glad to say they are in practice, the embodiment of the national interests, and the only security for popular privileges.

It is interesting to compare this with an extract from a speech made by Disraeli at the Crystal Palace on January 24, 1872, in the course of which he remarked: "The Tory party, unless it is a national party, is nothing. It is not a confederacy of nobles, it is not a democratic multitude, it is a party formed from all the numerous classes in the realm—classes alike and equal before the law, but whose different conditions and different aims give vigour and variety to the national life."

Of course, in giving utterance to opinions like these in the sixties and seventies, Disraeli was merely expressing, as a parliamentarian and statesman, the views which he had always held as a younger man and expressed in his earlier books. In the course of his political campaigns, however, he never let an opportunity pass without emphasising the broad foundation of the party to which he belonged. Compare with the two extracts already given, for example, a speech he delivered

at the dinner of the National Conservative Registration Association on January 26, 1863. Here again he laid stress on his favourite and well-justified principle: "The Tory party is only in its proper position when it represents popular principles. Then it is truly irresistible. . . . There is nothing mean, petty, or exclusive about the real character of Toryism. It necessarily depends upon enlarged sympathies and noble aspirations, because it is essentially national. The moment that Toryism deviates from that great fundamental principle, it is in danger."

But Disraeli, like most other men of imagination and insight, suffered from being born before his time. It is, indeed, men like him who are chiefly influential in making the future, and they are consequently neglected by the present. Probably the Tory party generally is prepared to accept his theories now, though it was not prepared to do so when Lord Randolph Churchill endeavoured to propagate them in the eighties. Witness, for example, Lord Randolph's utterance at Manchester on November 6, 1885, when he spoke on the state of parties and said incidentally:—

> What is the Tory democracy that the Whigs should deride it and hold it up to the execration of the people? It has been called a contradiction in terms; it has been described as a nonsensical policy. I believe it to be

the most simple and the most easily understood political denomination ever assumed. The Tory democracy is a democracy which has embraced the principles of the Tory party. It is a democracy which believes that a hereditary monarchy and hereditary House of Lords are the strongest fortifications which the wisdom of man, illuminated by the experience of centuries, can possibly devise for the protection, not of Whig privilege, but of democratic freedom. The Tory democracy is a democracy which adheres to and will defend the Established Church, because it believes that the Establishment is a guarantee of State morality, and that the connection between Church and State imparts to the ordinary functions of executive and law something of a divine sanction. The Tory democracy is a democracy which, under the shadow and under the protection of those great and ancient institutions, will resolutely follow the path of administrative and social reform.

More than two years later, on April 9, 1888, we note Lord Randolph propagating the doctrine at Birmingham with the same zeal :—

What is the Tory democracy ? The Tory democracy is a democracy which supports the Tory party ; but with this important qualification, that it supports the Tory party, not from mere caprice, not from momentary disgust or indignation with the results of Radicalism, but a democracy which supports the Tory party because it has been taught by experience and by knowledge to believe in the excellence and soundness of true Tory

principles. But Tory democracy involves also another idea of equal importance. It involves the idea of a Government who in all branches of their policy, and in all the features of the administration, are animated by lofty and liberal ideas. That is Tory democracy.

Generally speaking, Lord Randolph Churchill met with rather more success in his propaganda than did Disraeli, at all events among the people of the country. But his ideas, although eminently just and well founded, did not meet with the approval of the leaders of the Conservative party, and with Lord Randolph's untimely death the movement began to flag. Now, however, it would seem that Tory democracy is coming into its own as a practical political proposition. In view of the slowness of political parties as a whole to grasp new principles and new ideas, we can hardly wonder, perhaps, that the interest in the lower classes shown by Disraeli and Lord Randolph Churchill was looked upon with some amazement by the official party leaders. At any rate, the fact remains that the Young England movement of the forties was not a success. Those concerned in it paid too little attention to the spread and the effect of the individualistic doctrines which had been so sedulously propagated from Bentham onwards. They had forgotten or overlooked all that had happened since the first attacks were

made on the feudal system and the feudal spirit. They were unwilling to recognise that the former state of things could not be restored merely by young squires playing cricket with their fathers' tenants, or by the *grandes dames* of the counties giving balls for the benefit of the villagers. It was Disraeli alone who saw that the old system had actually passed away, and that before the new system could be changed the national character itself would have to be entirely altered. Hence his appeals for "loyalty and reverence," and his advocacy of the old Tory principles set forth with such force by Bolingbroke and Burke. Hence also his appeal to the imagination instead of the reason, for which, had he lived half a century later, he might have invoked the weighty support of Nietzsche himself.

A Tory democratic leader without a party, Disraeli was naturally at a disadvantage. Nor was he aided to any extent by the third movement against Radicalism and individualism, viz. the Christian Socialism of Frederick Denison Maurice and Charles Kingsley. These men looked upon individualism as selfishness pure and simple. They maintained, however, that this was contrary to the divine law, which called for the spirit of devotion, sacrifice, and co-operation. This latter principle naturally led them to protest

against the competition for which sturdy Radicals like Cobden and Bright always battled so fiercely, and they advocated association in its place. They were in agreement with Disraeli in recognising the uselessness of the vote, or indeed of political action in general, until such action was founded upon some new conception of the national character, which they wished to develop in accordance with Christian principles. They wanted to teach "true equality," as Kingsley put it, "not the carnal, dead-level equality of the Communist, but the spiritual equality of the Church idea, which gives every man an equal chance of developing and using God's gifts, and rewards every man according to his work without respect of persons."

Kingsley failed to see, however, that this philosophy could be traced to the source of that very Radical philosophy which he set out to combat, viz. the New Testament. The Christian Socialist movement, had it progressed on Kingsley's own principles, would inevitably have landed in due time at exactly the same spot as the philosophy of the individualists. Various associations were, however, founded by Kingsley and his friends, the profits being equally shared among the members. But in time a spirit of jealousy was developed, quarrels arose, and the

associations failed one by one. The middle classes, in some cases consciously, and in other cases unconsciously, actuated by their capitalistic instincts, looked upon the new organisations with some alarm, and thus public opinion—for middle-class opinion was predominant—was against the movement, as well as the other factors referred to. It was really impossible to found such organisations upon a wholly Christian basis, because, as Ostrogorski truly remarks, Christianity, in the Kingsley acceptation of the word, had ceased to be a general creed.

In addition to these three movements, which have naturally been taken into due account by the various political writers on this particular period, Ostrogorski professes to distinguish a fourth—the "philosophy" of Thomas Carlyle. Ostrogorski emphasises the fact that Carlyle bitterly criticised the multitude, made no secret of his contempt for party shibboleths, and sneered openly at "Benthamee formulas, barren as the east wind." The modern critic, however, will hardly attribute so much importance to Carlyle; and even Ostrogorski himself has to admit that Carlyle's appeals, however much they might succeed in stirring the somewhat sluggish English imagination of his time, were nevertheless purely negative. His criticisms demonstrated, certainly,

that the masses were unable to govern themselves, and that the party leaders talked too much and did too little. But from first to last he never put forward any positive policy; and this is one great distinction between the Carlylian movement, if we may call it so, and the other three movements already mentioned. The Tractarians endeavoured to reconcile the masses with the Church. Disraeli's party endeavoured to reconcile the masses with the aristocracy. Kingsley and Maurice endeavoured, with partial success, to find a substitute for competition. Carlyle alone did not follow up his destructive criticism with some constructive policy, however vague and however impracticable.

If, however, Radicalism and all it represented could not be combated from above, it could be combated from below. In the latter half of the nineteenth century the people of England acquired an uneasy familiarity with phrases concerning the rights of labour, Socialism, Communism, and Nationalisation. The capitalists, under the protection of Liberal Governments and "free competition," had ground down and exploited the workman until existence for the latter became unendurable. With many difficulties, and to the accompaniment of much ill-feeling and bloodshed, Trade Unions sprang into existence—

a clear and definite proof that workmen could no longer trust their employers, and that a distinct cleavage had been made in the nation.

In 1884 a further attempt was made to combat Liberalism by the establishment of the Fabian Society, the most influential members of which, practically from the start, were Mr Sidney Webb and Mr G. B. Shaw. The utter failure of the Fabian Society to discern the real needs of the masses, and the fact that the various cures suggested by its members were worse than the disease, does not make the experiment less interesting. A perusal of the Fabian Tracts, which, as the members of the Society would no doubt flatter themselves, have educated the public to a very high political plane, will at once show the defects of the movement. The organisers of the Society were middle-class people : " bourgeois " pure and simple. They were as middle class as Bentham or Mill—in fact, Mill, in his *Autobiography*, shows himself to have been all along a doctrinaire Socialist himself ; for he accepts " the name and the thing." A man must have an unusually strong mind and unusual imagination before he can rise above his class and take a detached view of political problems ; and these essential factors were lacking in the founders of the Fabian movement. All Mr Webb's plans

have been tinctured, unconsciously, no doubt, by a thoroughly bourgeois bias in favour of capitalism. We can see this over and over again in his Fabian leaflets, just as we can see it in one of his latest works, *The Prevention of Destitution.*

The Fabians have always maintained that they are not seeking a violent and hurried revolution : they prefer to make suggestions and to let them be carried out gradually through the usual constitutional channels : they rely upon the influence of ideas. Unfortunately, while these ideas of the Fabians are supposed to benefit the workman, they generally result in benefiting the employer. The case of the Railway Conciliation Boards will at once occur to the reader. As the consequence of the threatened general railway strike in 1907, the Liberal Cabinet arranged a scheme of Conciliation Boards which, it was thought, would be of much value in settling disputes without recourse to strikes or lock-outs. The Fabian Society took some credit for this scheme, and the Executive Committee sent a letter to the Press in which they complimented the representatives of the railwaymen for agreeing to the scheme, adding that it surpassed the men's wildest dreams. Yet, as events showed within so short a time as four years, the Conciliation Boards were never popular with the men, whose

grievances finally culminated in their breaking the contract solemnly entered into by their representatives.

This is one instance of Fabian short-sightedness, but many others might be added. Take the Labour party. The Fabians claim the Labour parliamentarians as one of their offshoots. The secretary of the Society, Mr E. R. Pease, made this pretty clear in an article which must be presumed to be based on official authority :—

> The Labour party, which the Society asked for in 1894, when it urged that Trade Unions and Trade Councils should form a political party of their own, raise a fund, and run fifty candidates for Parliament, has come into being, has raised its parliamentary fund, and ran precisely fifty candidates at the election of 1906. The astonishing success of twenty-nine of these set all England talking about Socialism, and the Socialist societies were flooded with new recruits, and their bank accounts laded with unexpected gold.[1]

While it is undoubtedly true that Socialist societies benefited by this event, the workman, with whom the Fabian Society in particular was supposed to be dealing, did not share in the spoils. Wages statistics show that workmen's earnings, fluctuating considerably during the eighties, rose

[1] See *T. P.'s Magazine* for March 1911, which contains a long article by Mr Pease on the Fabian Society and its work.

steadily from about 1893 (when a Labour Department was formed under the Board of Trade) to 1899 or 1900, when they tended on the whole to remain stationary. From about 1902 or 1903 to the present date wages have actually fallen in some trades and remained stationary in others, although the cost of living has increased in the meantime, and profits have also gone up. So that from about 1900 onwards the position of the workman in this country has steadily deteriorated. Why ? Because, strange though it may appear to the casual student of political affairs, the Labour party had in that time become a force in politics — a force of no great weight, certainly ; but an influence, nevertheless.

While it is true that a large number of Labour men were returned at the 1906 election, their influence was felt in Parliament before then. Mr Keir Hardie had sat in the 1892–95 House of Commons ; but he did not count at the time, because neither Socialism nor Labour had become acute political problems. But in 1900 Mr Keir Hardie returned to the House, where he was joined by another Labour member, Mr Richard Bell, and shortly afterwards, I believe, by an Independent Unionist Labour man, Mr Sloan. As the Balfour Government drew to a close, I am under the impression that this small Labour

party was slightly reinforced. It was from about 1900 onwards, therefore, that Labour men first thrust themselves forward in the House of Commons, and the result was a decline in wages. What, then, had the Labour leaders been doing previously to 1900 to account for a steady increase in wages from 1892 to 1899 ?

This is no very recondite question. In the nineties the Labour leaders had been paying attention to their proper duty, viz. the organisation of Trade Unions, Trade Union Funds, and, more important still from the workman's point of view, Trade Union agitation. When the Labour leaders left their unions for Parliament, they gradually got out of touch with the men, and a spirit of apathy fell over the entire Trade Union movement. Inexperienced as these well-meaning but uninstructed Labour leaders were, they did not know, and they were slow to recognise, that what the House of Commons, or rather the Government, gave with one hand it could take away with the other. I have already referred to the grant of £200,000 for unemployment as an instance of such giving and taking ; and the plans for the feeding of necessitous children give us another instance. In those districts where children were fed by the State, wages fell ; in those districts where the children were not

State-fed, wages remained at their customary level. In short, under a Liberal administration the capitalist always wins. It would be possible to discover several minor measures, ostensibly meant for the relief of the poor, and to show that they left the poor poorer. It would not be such a difficult task, either, to show that this result followed from Labour interference in Parliament, whereas Labour agitation through the former Trade Union channels would most probably have had quite the reverse effect. But it must not be forgotten that it was the Fabians who so strongly recommended the formation of a Labour party, and that the Fabian Society must therefore be held partly responsible for this further impoverishment of the poor.

If, however, we inquire into the origin of this blunder on the part of the Fabians, we shall throw a good deal of light on the failure of Socialist agitation in this country ; and not only the failure of Socialist agitation, but the failure of the Liberal party and its philosophers—the Benthams, Mills, and Hobhouses—to legislate adequately for the needs of the nation. We shall see, too, why the Conservative party has marched consistently from blunder to blunder since the death of Disraeli. The truth is that neither the Fabians, the Socialists, the Labour party, nor

Mill, nor Bentham, nor Professor Hobhouse, ever formed a clear conception of what the State should be. They never appear to have doubted for a moment that the State must necessarily be the result of an economic system, *i.e.* economics first, politics second. Apart from the fact that Fabian Socialist economics have always been of a crude variety, we may see here how this new school of thought made an egregious blunder at the very start. Knowing nothing of political science, they began their work at the wrong end. And exactly the same remark applies to every present-day critic of politics or sociology whose works or speeches I have had occasion to read. Men so different, not to say so widely at variance, as Mr J. A. Hobson and Mr F. E. Smith, Mr Masterman and Professor Hewins, the Rev. R. J. Campbell and Lord Morley, Mr Sidney Webb and Mr Austen Chamberlain: they all appear to be under the impression that abstract theories of the State are valueless; or, where in a few cases they do give us hints as to how they think the State ought to be organised, they seem to think that no special value need be attached to any abstract theory of the State, provided always that the economics are right.

It is here that I respectfully beg to differ from

all these great men. The modern writer on politics or sociology, I maintain—and I am supported, I think, by the best Continental authorities—will not proceed to criticise the economic or sociological conditions of his time without having first formed in his own mind a clear conception of what, in his opinion, the State should be. When he has formed his theory of the State, he is then at liberty to criticise the economics or sociology of the State in which he lives.

The Labour party in the House of Commons, of course, must be included in this censure. They, too, have no particular conception of a State in mind, and they are consequently unable to put forward any constructive policy. This, perhaps, might be forgiven them if they could at any rate have checked the exploitation of their presumed constituents by the Liberal capitalists; but even this, as I have already indicated, they have failed to do. Little by little they let themselves be outmanœuvred; they lost their independent status; and they are now justly regarded in political circles merely as a wing of the Liberals, and not a particularly advanced wing. The main faults of the Liberals —Puritanism, and a decided tendency to interfere unduly in the private concerns of the citizen

—are also to be found in the Labour party. The members of the Labour group, indeed, look upon men of ideas even more suspiciously than the Tories do. They have consistently driven from their ranks any man who showed an aptitude for independent thought, and they have carefully neglected any Press criticism which was calculated to be of value to them. In a work of this nature, of course, the Labour members must be mentioned ; but it is perhaps stretching a point to include them in a chapter dealing with counter-movements to Liberalism. It cannot now be said that there is any very great difference between the programmes of the Liberal party and the Labour party.

This arises, no doubt, from the over-reliance which Englishmen in general have always been ready to place in the vote. When the leaders of the New Unionism in the early nineties advised the workmen to secure what they wanted by legislation rather than by strikes—"never to strike except on the ballot-box,"—they sincerely believed that their counsel was excellent. Yet some of the leaders of this very New Unionism have now come to recognise that a government can take away when making a pretence of giving. Hence we now find Labour leaders making strenuous efforts to organise general strikes—the

movement known in France as Syndicalisme.[1] But the real leaders of the working men are not now to be found on the benches of the House of Commons; and the strikes in 1911 showed conclusively that, firstly, the Labour members were entirely out of touch with the labour movement throughout the country, and that, secondly, when they became familiar with its ramifications they endeavoured to co-operate with the Government (*i.e.* the capitalists) in getting things "settled" as quickly as possible, even if the workmen suffered in the process.

We cannot consider any further counter-movements, then, because there are none. The extreme Socialists and Communists have no practicable political plans to put forward. The middle-class Fabians and the Labour party are, consciously or unconsciously, working hand in glove with the Liberals and Radicals; and Professor Hobhouse, in his monograph on Liberalism, twists himself into

[1] Mr Tom Mann, one of the leaders of the New Unionism, perceived that the views which he advocated in the nineties were useless when put into practice. He therefore played a prominent part in organising the shipping strike in the summer of 1911, and in furthering the progress of Syndicalism in England. I believe these remarks also apply to Mr Ben Tillett, who became so well known in connection with the dock strikes of 1889 and 1911.

intellectual contortions to show that this is quite right and proper. There is, it is true, a potential check on Liberalism ; but the House of Lords in its new form demands a chapter to itself.

VIII

THE HOUSE OF LORDS

"MISÉRABLES!" cried Napoleon when the allies entered Paris in 1815. "Ils ne voient pas que j'ai éteint les révolutions et travaillé vingt ans à consolider la monarchie? Ils verront qu'après moi ils ne seront pas assez forts pour arrêter le torrent, qui les entraînera tous." "Princes," said Bismarck to Busch (September 27, 1888), "began to degenerate from 1840 onwards." "There is no longer, in fact, an aristocracy in England," said Disraeli, in *Sybil*; "for the superiority of the animal man is an essential quality of aristocracy."

As Disraeli said on another occasion, authors are the creators of opinion.[1] The opinion created by Western European authors during the eighteenth century was that the principles of aristocracy and monarchy were bad; that democracy

[1] Speech in the House of Commons on the Copyright Bill, April 25, 1838.

was the only rational form of government. The French Revolution was the first important attempt to put these opinions into practice ; and the attempt proved, unfortunately for those who believed in aristocracy, that the opinion thus created was to a large extent justifiable and strictly accurate. The French nobility, long looked upon as the flower of the European aristocracy, collapsed at the first onslaught. They were blind to the signs of the times and deaf to the complaints of the common people.

The principle of aristocracy, however, is not proved to be bad merely because aristocrats become degenerate here and there. An aristocracy—speaking, of course, of an aristocracy of birth—may degenerate through known causes, which may be afterwards avoided.. One aristocracy may be able to profit by the bad example of another. The French Revolutionists had a fanatical belief in the erroneous doctrine of the equality of man. It remained for other aristocracies to show that they possessed qualities which rendered them superior to their fellows.

Some writers have endeavoured to make out that the English aristocracy actually did this, instancing the fact that the French Revolution consolidated the English Monarchy and aristocracy more than ever. But it is only too clear

that the English aristocracy was not consolidated towards the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth because of its superior intelligence or other good qualities, but merely because of the general fear experienced by the nation. When thrones began to tumble down all over the Continent, the English people grouped themselves solidly round their ruling classes.

Now, this was a magnificent opportunity for the ruling classes of the time to utilise; but they neglected it. About the beginning of the nineteenth century the working population of England was in a state of the utmost misery. Wages were low, and the hours of labour interminable. Children were put out to work in mines and factories to be mercilessly sweated. Poaching, and other offences where property entered into the question, were drastically over-punished. Jews and Roman Catholics, the conserving forces of any nation, were excluded from power. With the development of commercialism the land was gradually becoming neglected. The old personal relationship between the nobility and their dependents was being done away with little by little; and in the large commercial establishments such a thing as personal relationship between master and man was never even

thought of. A few of Disraeli's novels, such as *Sybil*, well sum up the horrors of the period.

If at that time the English ruling classes had set themselves to study and solve the sociological and economic problems which were becoming only too apparent, they would have consolidated their position in reality as well as in appearance. But, taking them as a whole, they did not. Preponderant in both Houses of Parliament, the aristocracy could have vastly improved the position of the working classes. But there was no Turgot among them, and the development of trade following the Napoleonic wars made an end of their supreme authority.

But, while the Reform Bill of 1832 deprived the landed gentry of some of their power, it left the peers untouched. The nobility had another chance. The House of Commons was becoming filled with the representatives of trade, and the spread of the individualistic doctrines resulted in members of Parliament becoming sectional rather than national. The House of Lords, then, in spite of the efforts of successive nineteenth-century Liberal governments to dilute the old order with new creations, could have continued to represent the nation in accordance with the precepts of Burke. Even this, however, it failed to do. The peers themselves, partly as the result

of their neglect of the land, partly as the result of the influence of newly created commercial peers, began to be infected with the money fever. And from 1880 onwards the House of Lords, the vast majority of its members being Conservatives, showed itself to be nothing more than an appanage of the Tory Caucus.[1] This is, perhaps, the severest reproach that can be cast at it.

It was evident to all politicians that the two Caucuses merely represented party interests, not even the interests of their own followings in the country. What was the obvious duty of the House of Lords in such circumstances? Naturally, to let no bill pass that was clearly drawn up to please the Caucus alone, and to improve in every way possible those bills which equally clearly had a solid national support, whatever party secured their passage through the House of Commons. Instead of this, the House of Lords slavishly passed every measure introduced by a Conservative government, whether drawn up by the Caucus or not, and rejected many important Liberal measures which they should have accepted. The duty of the Upper House, indeed, presupposed two things: that the Lords, in the first place, had the necessary insight into the

[1] They never exhibited what Machiavelli calls "fortunate astuteness." See ch. ix. of *The Prince*.

needs of the nation, and that, in the second place, they would refuse to be browbeaten by the Caucus. Precisely these two factors were lacking. The peers knew as little about the needs of the people at the beginning of the twentieth century as they did at the beginning of the nineteenth—and this in spite of the fact that they could see for themselves the results of a hundred years' democracy, what its defects were, and how it could be combated. They were unable to recognise their own benefactors. They were ready to cry out against Napoleon, for instance ; but they could not see that it was exactly Napoleon who had given monarchy and aristocracy a new lease of life. They saw in Bismarck only a visionary and a day-dreamer, without recognising for a moment that Bismarck was taking the only possible steps to secure the permanence of the aristocratic order, viz. by allying it with the working classes.

In this very connection, Dr von Gneist passes some very severe strictures upon the English peers and the propertied classes generally, which are just as true to-day as when he wrote them in the late eighties. He is speaking of the rapid democratisation of England in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and this is one of the causes to which he attributes the democratisation :—

In this state of things, a comparison with the older experiences of the Continent is again forced upon the student. Here we again see the same amazing short-sightedness of the propertied classes for the crises pending in the near future, due to the fact that in limited social circles the displacement or disturbance of the main relations is not readily perceived. The inactive peer, who in previous generations formed the exception, has become an every-day phenomenon at a time when the very existence of the House of Lords is at stake. An irresistible desire to wander abroad has taken possession of the landed gentry at a time when their presence on their estates has become more necessary than ever, in order that they may not utterly lose their waning local influence. The daily press and current literature are engaged with unwearied zeal in every department of natural and moral science, as if the great vessel of the English State had already been safely piloted to a harbour of refuge. The daily press dwells in a fool's paradise of self-oblivion and self-deception as to the vital conditions of the State, as if the question of the "to be or not to be" of the parliamentary constitution were still to be decided with a sort of papal infallibility by the mere force of public opinion. All moves as formerly in France or Germany when on the very brink of the precipice. . . . The outside observer may perhaps venture to prophesy that it will be hard to recognise the present public opinion at the close of the century, and that the leading periodical press of the day would be struck dumb were it allowed to read itself at that date, and to see how disas-

trous for the destinies of the nation had been its blind worship of public opinion.[1]

These opinions of Dr von Gneist differ little, except in the form of expression, from many that Disraeli constantly puts into the mouths of several of the characters in his novels. The fact is, Disraeli had long been trying to do in England what Bismarck was doing in Germany. From the 1830's onwards Disraeli kept dinning into the ears of unintelligent Tories the principles of the very policy which Bismarck put into effect in Germany from 1879 onwards. But in spite of his exceptionally brilliant talents, it was many a year before Disraeli worked his way to a commanding position in the Conservative party, and to the very last there were old-fashioned Tories who looked upon him with suspicion. Prejudice, hatred, sneers, suspicion, neglect, contumely: such were the rewards of the man who alone represented a practical Conservative policy during the nineteenth century.

Disraeli's ultimate success, however, in no way atoned for his early neglect. The year of his death saw the triumph of the Caucus, and there was no man of sufficient intelligence left in the Tory party to show how the Caucus and its

[1] Heinrich Rudolf von Gneist, *History of the English Parliament*, ch. xi.

measures should be dealt with. The establishment of the Caucus meant another opportunity for the House of Lords; but this opportunity was again neglected.

The Parliament Bill of 1911, however, gives the House of Lords quite a different status. The Upper House can no longer throw out bills, but (with the exception of financial measures) it may hold them up for two years. This suspensive veto can be regarded only from two standpoints: for an efficient second chamber it is an almost ideal principle; and for an inefficient second chamber it means eventual ruin. Let us suppose that a measure, at the dictation of one Caucus or the other, such as the Insurance Bill, is passed by the House of Commons. The flimsy and baseless arguments of the party press (both sides) may have deceived a large number of superficial electors. But the House of Lords has now ample powers for dealing with such a measure. All depends on the abilities of the peers to criticise unsatisfactory or unnecessary measures. What is likely to become of any bill which is hung up for two years, and which is assailed during a great proportion of that time by a series of thoroughly efficient criticisms? No matter what powerful backing the bill may have in the Lower House, criticism in the House of Lords must henceforth

count for infinitely more than formerly ; for this House must in future justify itself by its criticism, and by its criticism alone.

Everything lies, however, in the form and substance of such criticism. It will be useless, for example, to make vague and sentimental appeals to "empire," "loyalty," and so forth. If the House of Lords is to secure the moral influence which it can secure if it sets about its task in the right way, it must criticise ; but it must above all criticise soundly. It must become thoroughly familiar with sociological and economic questions ; and to be able to do this (if the matter must be expressed more bluntly), about 90 per cent. of the present peers must go to school again. But this time it must be to a school of modern philosophy ; for there can be no criticism without some philosophical basis.

In truth, if our peers, or rather the majority of them, were only a little more intelligent, they would find that the Parliament Bill gives them practically unlimited power to render null and void all measures which the people of the country do not want. Their absolute veto is gone, it is true ; but more can be done with a moral suspensory veto than with an ill-used absolute one. For several generations the Pope has been unable to control standing armies or to exercise temporal

authority. Yet the influence of the Vatican, despite recent events in Portugal and France, was never stronger among Catholics. The power of moral influence is unlimited when it is properly exercised; but it cannot be exercised by blockheads. In recent years the Vatican diplomacy has become the most adroit in the world. The moral influence of the House of Lords will be respected, and its criticisms attentively studied, not merely by the English people, but by the Empire as a whole, on the single condition that such criticisms are well founded.

This point is, of course, the crux. Let any one read the debates in the House of Lords on the Parliament Bill. Here, if anywhere, was an opportunity for the peers to display their constructive talent. It was an opportunity which in almost any other country would have been taken advantage of to the full. It was an occasion when general principles of government could have been laid down—the extent to which the State should interfere, the extent to which a second chamber was necessary, or why it was necessary at all, the distinction between aristocracy and democracy, between the Liberalism which the Government professed a keen desire to advance and the Conservatism with which the Tory leaders professed an equally keen desire to

check its progress, the distinction between the nation and State, and what the actual basis of the State ought to be. Then there was an opportunity for applying any general principles that might be laid down to the practical English politics of the time ; an opportunity for analysing the present situation, showing its causes, and, if necessary, its best remedies. There was no time limit on members' speeches in the House of Lords, as there was in the House of Commons, no "guillotine," no eleven o'clock rule. The environment was well adapted to a highly intellectual debate.

Unfortunately, no such debate took place. With the exception of a few speeches by the "stars," such as Lord Curzon, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Rosebery, and one or two others, there was no attempt made to combat the Parliament Bill on scientific grounds or philosophic principles—in other words, there was no adequate criticism of it. Even the very best speeches delivered on the occasion referred to added but little to our knowledge of political science or sociology, and practically nothing to our knowledge of economics. Some three hundred peers, indeed, took no part in the proceedings at all (Dr von Gneist's "inactive peer"). Many of the others were, so far as appearances went, more desirous of saving

their order from "dilution" by new creations than of helping the nation in general and the Liberal Government in particular to solve the political problems under discussion.

If future bills sent up by the House of Commons are criticised by the peers in this way, it may as well be said at once that the House of Lords will never regain its ascendency. If we want any further proof of this, we need only look for it in the so-called "die-hard" movement of the peers who had sense enough to oppose the Caucuses and wished to throw out the Parliament Bill when it came back from the Commons with the peers' amendments rejected. For several days the small body of "die-hards" (who turned out at the critical division to number over a hundred), under the Earl of Halsbury and Lord Willoughby de Broke, conducted their campaign with much persistence, energy, and skill. Two or three influential newspapers supported them wholeheartedly. Many influential men and women, apart from peers and peeresses, were in favour of the movement. Yet, in spite of press and society assistance, the movement failed; and it deserved to fail. Why? Because there was no intelligence at the back of it. Not a single idea was brought forward in support of it, either by the peers who led the movement, the peers who

associated their names with it, or the few members of the House of Commons who lent their aid. There was much party disloyalty, which became more apparent the more it was denied ; there was much skill shown in organisation, and in keeping back the full list of the " die-hards " until the last moment. But there were no ideas. Not a single new argument was brought forward to show cause why we should change our opinions of the arguments previously set forth by Mr Asquith and Lord Morley. The same old strings were harped upon : single chamber government, the disestablishment of the Church, Home Rule for Ireland, the preservation of the Empire, etc.

All this, of course, was entirely unphilosophical. It is strange that no " die-hard " ever thought of adducing a plausible argument to show why single chamber government is wrong; what the disestablishment of the Church would matter, if it mattered anything, or why, indeed, the Church should be " established " at all ; why Home Rule should be withheld from Ireland when it was granted to Canada, Australia, and South Africa ; or why the Empire should be preserved. These things might be good or bad ; the awful consequences forecasted by the " die-hards " might be right or wrong. The point is that in no case was a solid argument ever brought forward to show

the why and wherefore. The peers, in short, did not seem to know the meaning of first principles ; and without a thorough comprehension of the first principles of government their discussion of these questions was farcical. The peers spoke of " Empire," and they confused the loose phrases of the sentimental Imperialist with the arguments of political scientists. They spoke of the poor ; and they mistook the idealistic poor of the charity sermon for the poor and the problem of poverty as known to the sociologist. In one or two cases they referred to tariffs ; and they exhibited their amazing ignorance of economics by the facility and glibness with which they chattered about free trade within the Empire, our obsolete fiscal system, etc., etc. These observations, unfortunately, would apply equally well to many of the peers who made election speeches on behalf of the Conservative party during the campaign preceding the election in the winter of 1910. The seven sleepers of Ephesus, Rip van Winkle himself, were no more astonished at the sight of their new world than were some of the peers in question.

On the other hand, this very election campaign demonstrated how strong was the local territorial influence of a large number of the so-called backwoodsmen ; and this is a point upon which far

too little stress has been laid by Conservative journalists and speakers. This is the last remnant of the feudal spirit; and it is the duty of all those who can still influence this spirit to foster it by taking the hints given by Dr von Gneist. The recent record of the peerage is black enough: the most fervent admirer of the nobles must admit, although he will admit it with regret, that for one instance of their wisdom during the nineteenth century it would be easy to find a hundred instances of their stupidity. To parody Horace, "virtus est stultitiam fugere." If the peers will only do this, uniting their local influence with parliamentary abilities, the future government of the country is in their hands.

There is one other point which is bound to tell enormously in favour of the moral influence of the peers, viz. the decision of the House of Commons to pay its members £400 a year. It is no excuse to say that this is merely a revival of a practice that prevailed up to the seventeenth century. For more than two hundred years the people of this country have always looked upon their legislators with a certain amount of respect, if only for the reason that they discharged onerous duties without payment. This gave not only the House of Lords, but also the House of Commons, a

powerful moral influence, and the force of moral influence should never be under-estimated. What payment of members, in the case of the House of Commons, amounts to is simply this : the two Caucuses, who have the deciding voice in the selection of at least ninety-five candidates out of a hundred, have now, let us say, some six hundred good positions at £400 a year at their disposal. This gives them increased power over party candidates ; and they can still make sure of " straight voting " by the fact that election expenses are not to be paid by the State.

However, we are not so much concerned with the new influence which the plan for payment of members gives to the Caucuses as with the increased moral support it gives to the House of Lords. There is now only one Chamber upon which, assuming that legislation should be an honorary affair, the electors can look with respect. The peers are serving the State free of charge ; the Commons are not. It cannot be assumed for a moment that this will make no difference to the electorate.

Here again the House of Lords must learn to play its cards better. One of Nietzsche's truest passages in *Beyond Good and Evil* is that in which he says, " One who has lost his self-respect

no longer commands ; no longer leads." [1] The peers, it is true, have their future in their own hands ; but, if they have no confidence in themselves, how shall anyone breathe into them the breath of the Lord ?

[1] Aphorism 205.

IX

A CONCEPTION OF THE STATE

When considering the fundamental conditions of a State and its organisation, there is at least one man on whom we can particularly rely. Machiavelli's wide historical studies and his varied diplomatic and political experience make all his remarks on government interesting, especially when we recollect that so many of his sociological theories were based on a close study of the works of Aristotle. From the standpoint of modern Liberalism, of course, Machiavelli might almost be called pessimistic, for he was under no illusion as to the essential goodness or badness of human nature. Take, for example, the main theory upon which practically all his other political theories were based :—

Those who lay the foundations of a State and furnish it with laws must, as is shown by all who have treated of civil Government, and by examples of which history is full, assume that all men are bad and that they will

always, when they have a free field, give loose to their evil inclinations; and that if these for a while remain hidden, it is owing to some secret cause which, from our having no contrary experience, we do not recognise at once, but which is afterwards revealed by Time, of whom we speak as the father of all truth.[1]

Assuming that this is the nature of man—an assumption which only Liberal sentimentalists would contradict—what can we describe as the function of the State; that is to say, a nation of such men acting in a corporate capacity? This function has been partly defined by Nietzsche: it is, "to keep law, order, quietness, and peace among millions of boundlessly egoistical, unjust, unreasonable, dishonourable, envious, malignant, and hence very narrow-minded and perverse human beings; and thus to protect the few things that the State has conquered for itself against covetous neighbours and jealous robbers."[2] Even this definition, however, like so many other definitions of the functions of the State, is inadequate: it either explains too much or does not explain enough. It may be—as I personally think it is—the function of the State to do more than merely preserve order; or it may happen that in its task of preserving order the State may

[1] *Discorsi*, bk. i. ch. iii.
[2] *On the Future of our Educational Institutions*, ch. iii. *ad fin.*

have to undertake duties which at first sight would not seem to be included in the term.

If, again, we look upon the State as a sort of compulsory partnership, as Burke would seem to do, we may interfere to too great an extent with the liberty of the subject, though we might perhaps fare better with such a régime than under what seems to be Mill's ideal, whereby the State would become a sort of joint-stock company, with the middle classes sharing the profits obtained as the result of the labour of the lower classes.

It is hardly necessary, for the purposes aimed at in this volume, to go into the details of the various forms of States which have existed from ancient times up to the present. It will be sufficient to point out the great distinction which has separated two schools of political thought from, say, the time of Plato onwards. The distinction is this: one school starts from the assumption that the individual is the unit of society or the State; while the other believes that the individual is not the unit, but that something came before him. Nietzsche lends his authority to the statement that society is based on the *gens*. In this he agrees with Aristotle, whose assumption is that society began with the household. This non-individualistic

view of the origin of society would appear to have been held both in theory and in practice by Bolingbroke and Burke, and it is indeed the only theory upon which in practice a State can be based.

The philosophy of the other school, the individualistic school, is to be sought in the works of Plato and of Rousseau. Plato, far from attaching to the household the importance attached to it by Aristotle, practically abolishes it in the Republic, and, although he attempts to reconstruct it again in the Laws, he leaves it even there with but a very shadowy existence.

When speaking of the Aristotelian household, of course, we have to remember that it differs to some extent from what we now conceive by this expression. The women in it had no "rights": the Greeks were no sentimentalists, and the foundations of the Greek State were, above all, masculine. Newman, in his introduction to Aristotle's *Politics*, shows us the two extremes: the fact that in the Aristotelian household the husband was not meant to derive any moral stimulus or guidance from the wife; and, on the other hand, the view held by Comte, who believed that the function of the household was "to cultivate to the highest point the influence of woman over man."

The general teaching of the non-individualistic school presupposes in practice a hierarchical social system, as we see from the fourth book of Aristotle's *Politics*. Although Aristotle's State would be founded on a broad basis of slavery, the slave would certainly be no worse off than the various grades of modern unskilled workmen who foolishly think they are "free." But the highest things in the State would be left to the highest natures to deal with; although there would be a place for the merchant, the handicraftsman, and the slave, and although each of these classes would be allowed an amount of freedom which would probably have satisfied even Rousseau himself, there would be no such thing as equal rights. "Equal rights" have always been loudly demanded by the school of Rousseau, Hobbes, Locke, Bentham, and Mill, their assumption being that all men are born equal and that they should all be equal in society and before the law. This was a point in regard to which Rousseau attacked Aristotle with unusual bitterness;[1] and, of course, equal stress was laid upon it by those Liberal philosophers to whom I have already had occasion to refer.

This hierarchical system of society was seen to the greatest advantage amongst the ancient

[1] See ch. ii. of the *Contrat Social.*

Hindus, and even at the present day its effects are still apparent. As we know from the Laws of Manu, ancient Indian society was divided into four castes: (1) the Brahmans, who acted as philosophers and priests, and were consequently the intellectual leaders of the people; (2) the Kshattriyas, which caste included the kings, nobles, and warriors; (3) the Vaishyas, or merchants; and (4) the Sudras, or work-people.

In practice, this type of society would hardly be found suitable for modern industrial nations; but in theory, and for an intellectual people, it is ideal. Resembling it to some extent is the Judaic theocracy, where the State was based upon the Commandments of God as interpreted by an authoritative priesthood. This, too, is an excellent foundation for a State, but unsuited to the sceptical people of the modern Western world.

For the purposes of examining the political bases of Tory Democracy, it will hardly be necessary for us to follow Bluntschli in his highly interesting and instructive analysis of various types of State. It will be sufficient for us to remember two definitions of Nietzsche, viz. that "Aristocracy represents the belief in a chosen few—in a higher caste," and that "Democracy represents the disbelief in all great men and in

all *élite* societies: everybody is everybody else's equal—'at bottom we are all herd and mob.'" This definition of democracy might be well applied to the English Liberal middle classes; but it must be recollected that Tory Democracy does not take the middle classes into account, except in so far as they give up their Liberal principles and adopt the principles of Conservatism. Tory Democracy represents the union of Aristocracy with Labour, in accordance, I will not say with the old feudal ideal, but rather with the old feudal practice—a practice which existed long before the middle classes or the capitalists or the philosophy of John Stuart Mill came into existence at all. The great crime of the middle classes is that they have raised an artificial barrier between the aristocracy and the working classes. No one has benefited by this move, with the exception of the middle classes themselves; but both the aristocracy and the working classes have suffered by it.

As Ostrogorski has shown, the middle classes in England were always too materialistic to show very much public spirit or to care for anything but their own material interests. Their philosophers glorified personal property as opposed to landed property. Their own agitation gained them a certain amount of social

and political power with the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832, after which time they showed no particular disposition to apply themselves to politics except in so far as this was necessary to consolidate their power and to keep the working classes in subjection.

Again, the views held by the Liberals on Local Government tended, when put into practice, to interfere with the former unit of local administration, viz. the parish, and this, combined with their neglect of their personal responsibilities towards the State, has drawn some very grave observations from Dr von Gneist, who remarks, speaking of the new system of administration by boards :—

> The perilous step of setting aside all personal duty and responsibility in the communal body has destroyed the whole structure, and this change, little noticed at first, involves more far-reaching consequences for England than would the abolition of the general duty of serving in the army for Germany. Here becomes evident the organic defect of the actual English State body, which provokes constantly fresh systems of acute social disease. Through the abolition of the personal duties of the citizen, the communal body is in fact virtually transformed into a system of shareholders, to whom the name of self-government is still, though wrongly, applied.
>
> But the administration of the communal life, owing

to its peculiar nature, can no more be founded on a system of voluntaryism than can the defence of a country on volunteer corps alone. But, as the new Boards declined all responsibility, the law was obliged to constitute the subordinate paid officials (clerks, book-keepers, accountants, assistant overseers, poorhouse officials), intermediate State officials, responsible for the administration, and had, secondly, to render them subject to dismissal, and to official discipline, under control of a central Board.

In order to keep this law of supervision effective, all details of this administration had to be kept under strict control through Government inspectors and auditors. Thus originated the present system of home administration by "Boards," which in its centralisation and tutelary administration is essentially like the French system. . . . The extinction of all sentiment for local communal life ("the Parochial mind") is a complaint uttered in constantly louder tones, while no one reflects how, in its fierce rivalry, party legislation has effected the dissolution of the moral and legal union of the communes, and that those merely interested in the local burdens are placed in as isolated a position towards each other as are the shareholders of a private company. . . . Thus more and more disintegrated from year to year become the *communitates*, on whose personal coherence the parliamentary body depended, both in its origin and at every stage of its progressive development.[1]

[1] Dr Heinrich Rudolf von Gneist, *History of the English Parliament*, ch. vii.

As Dr von Gneist points out in ch. xi. of the same book, the further extension of the English franchise in 1885 "sufficed to render visible and sensible, more especially in the region of political reforms, the organic fault: through displacing the foundations of the parliamentary system."

Indeed, the cardinal defect of English parliamentary legislation during the nineteenth century was well summed up by Matthew Arnold when he spoke of and for the middle classes: "We have not the notion, so familiar on the Continent and to antiquity, of the State—the nation, in its collective and corporate character, entrusted with stringent powers for the general advantage, and controlling individual wills in the name of an interest wider than that of individuals."[1] It would perhaps be truer to say that the nation did possess this notion of the State under its feudal leaders and the influence of tradition, but that a break was made in the tradition by the school of Hobbes and Locke.

Half a century before Dr von Gneist wrote these words, the Chartist petition was presented to the House of Commons, and Disraeli commented upon it in almost identical terms:—

[1] *Culture and Anarchy*, ch. ii.

The old constitution invested a small portion of the nation with political rights. Those rights were entrusted to that small class on certain conditions—that they should guard the civil rights of the great multitude. It was not even left them as a matter of honour ; society was so constituted that they were entrusted with duties which they were obliged to fulfil. They had transferred a great part of that political power to a new class, whom they had not invested with those great public duties. Great duties could alone confer great station, and the new class which had been invested with political station had not been bound up with the great mass of the people by the exercise of social duties. For instance, the administration of justice, the regulation of parishes, the building of roads and bridges, the command of the militia and police, the employment of labour, the distribution of relief—these were great duties which ordinarily had been confined to that body in the nation which enjoyed and exercised political power. But now they had a class that had attained that great object that all the opulent desired—political power without the conditions annexed to its possession, and without fulfilling the duties which it should impose.

It cannot be denied that this gradual dissolution of the old social order was the natural consequence of Liberalism—in fact, many Liberals seem to pride themselves upon it rather than otherwise. The power of the aristocracy in the country districts had been shattered, and was replaced by boards, the members of which were

subject to a central authority. It is worth bearing in mind that when the Liberals speak of decentralisation and local government, they mean that the powers of the central authority shall devolve, not, as before, upon the aristocracy and the landed gentry, but upon such bodies as the County Councils, whose members are drawn chiefly from the middle classes—whose members, in other words, spring from a Liberal soil.

To anyone who is acquainted with the narrow-mindedness and philistinism of these local bodies, local government under such auspices would be intolerable. Yet that such a policy of decentralisation forms part of modern Liberal philosophy is evident, and is yet another instance of the downward trend in our sociological system which set in with Hobbes and Locke.

It is well worth while emphasising the conduct of the aristocracy at the time of the passing of the Reform Bill; for not only our aristocracy, but aristocracy considered as a purely abstract proposition, has a place in English politics. As Bluntschli said, it is no true aristocracy unless the best (*οἱ ἄριστοι*) really rule. "Aristocracy loses all real vitality when the ruling class degenerates from the qualities which raised it to power, when its character decays, and it becomes

weak and vain. It perishes equally, even though its great qualities remain, when the subject classes attain to equal distinction, and the old aristocracy is too negligent or too disdainful to complete and strengthen its own forces by their admission." [1] As Bluntschli quite rightly adds, aristocracy "may dispense with the affection, but never with the respect of its subjects. . . . As democracy, as a rule, is too fickle and changeable, so aristocracy rushes into the opposite fault of excessive fixity and obstinacy."

There is a lesson here for our aristocracy to learn. There is a distinct place for the nobles in English government, and the new Constitution of the House of Lords gives them very wide powers indeed. In the past, however, they neglected their duties towards the lower orders: in short, they were unjust.

We can speak of justice in this connection without going into minute definitions of its meaning to the extent that Plato has done in the *Republic*. From the highest to the lowest in the land, every man has some broad conception of what is meant by justice, in exactly the same way as he has some conception of what is meant by truth. In a highly interesting work entitled *The Province of the State*, Sir Roland K. Wilson accurately

[1] Bluntschli's *Theory of the State*, bk. vi. ch. xix.

describes the State as "a justice-enforcing association," though he does not, like Plato, go into the minor shades of the signification which he attaches to the word justice itself. In ascribing to the State the function he does, Sir Roland has, perhaps without actually knowing it, laid down an important distinction which is almost certain to be more and more accentuated in the course of the next few years.

As there are two schools of political thought, so also are there naturally not merely two different conceptions of the organisation of the State, but likewise, as necessarily follows, two different conceptions of the functions which the State should take upon itself. We may, with Sir Roland K. Wilson, Burke, Aristotle, and all other political scientists of the higher order, look upon the State as a justice-enforcing association, which inevitably pre-supposes a hierarchial society; or we may, with the school of Plato and Rousseau, look upon the State as an instrument for securing in the practical life of society the realities corresponding to the abstract dogmas of the French Revolutionist, viz. liberty, equality, and fraternity. These idealistic dogmas, of course, were not confined merely to the French Revolution: they are likewise the stock-in-trade of modern English Liberals. In his latest book, *Liberalism*, for

example, Professor Hobhouse continually emphasises liberty and equality as Liberal principles, and manifests great exultation whenever he has occasion to write of something which has been done by the House of Commons or any other body towards abolishing privileges and giving the "individual" greater freedom than he had before.

Let it be admitted that the Liberals are sufficiently logical and consistent in their ideas of equality. They demand not merely equality among the different classes of white men inhabiting any particular country: they insist upon such equality being extended also to coloured races. They make no distinction between coloured races like the Hindu and the Chinese, who have come through a much longer period of civilisation than the Europeans, and are consequently, from a spiritual standpoint, much superior to them, and other coloured races like the American negroes or some half-savage tribe in Africa which, in spite of many virtues peculiar to themselves, are at a much lower stage of civilisation than the white races.

We are left to choose between justice on the one hand, and the shadowy formulas of liberty, equality, and fraternity on the other. The alternatives are mutually exclusive. The doc-

trines of the Rousseau school do not postulate justice at all, as was clearly shown not only at the time of the French Revolution, but by recent Liberal legislation in England, such as the Licensing Bill and the Insurance Bill. On the other hand, the administration of justice may very often be quite incompatible with equality and fraternity — note, for example, the strict measures which even a Liberal government was compelled to adopt for dealing with the strikes in the summer of 1911 ; and justice is certainly not compatible with the wide meaning attached to liberty by that school which makes liberty, equality, and fraternity the main items in its political programme.

Given the choice of these alternatives, then, the Tory-Democratic school will have no hesitation in choosing justice as the end to be attained by the State. Bearing in mind that justice would be universally administered—that it would apply to the nobility and the wealthy as well as to the poor—there is no reason, as Sir Roland Wilson says, why the suffrage should not be as nearly as possible universal and equal. Even a Tory of the old school would hardly raise any objection to this if he cared to consider a comment of Sir Roland's on the proposed justice-enforcing association :—

The common objection to equal universal suffrage, namely, that the comparatively poor, being a majority, could combine to tax the rich for their own benefit, would cease to have any force when it is once for all understood that the association was formed for no other purpose than the defining and enforcing of justice, and that taxation for any other purpose, however laudable in itself, such as that of relieving destitution, is *ultra vires* and immoral; whereas the further the practice is extended of applying the produce of rates and taxes, and the profits of State-managed businesses to any and every purpose which happens to commend itself to the dominant majority, the more closely will the case approximate to that of an ordinary joint-stock company, and the more reasonable will it seem that the voting power of each shareholder should be proportionate to the amount of his contribution.[1]

It is interesting to follow Sir Roland Wilson in his description of the necessary operations of a justice-enforcing association. The administration of justice necessarily presupposes the establishment and maintenance of judicial tribunals, together with a police force to support, if necessary, the decisions pronounced by the judges. In adding to his list a Military and Naval Department, a Foreign Office, a Diplomatic Service, and a Colonial Office, Sir Roland apparently makes no great alteration in the present system, though

[1] *The Province of the State*, ch. i.

it may be mentioned in passing that he effectively disposes of the ludicrous argument, purely Liberal in its origin, that there should be no armaments except for defensive purposes. The Fiscal Department he outlines, however, would serve very well as a means whereby the State could control those forms of public industry which Tory-Democratic economists would advise it to take over. The branch of his association dealing with Land management and Public Works would also have its uses. With the remaining views advocated by Sir Roland we are not at present directly concerned. Where education is in question, for example, I personally conceive that it would not be the function of a justice-enforcing association to educate the children of the poor, or the children of any other class of society. Indeed, I take it that under the rule of such an association there would be no poor as we understand the word and the unfortunate class of beings whom it represents. The association would doubtless see to it that the working classes, who are usually meant by the "poor," would have a sufficiently high wage to pay for the schooling of their own children in whatever institution they might think it advisable to send them to. The present Liberal system of payment in kind—that is, giving the workman free schools

for his children, free feeding for his children if they come under the official heading of "necessitous," free medical inspection, and so on—might almost be called a State evasion of the Truck Act, an evasion which it is hardly likely would be permitted in the case of a private employer.

To sum up, then, the Tory-Democratic conception of the State would differ from the present Liberal conception of it in that, by casting aside the illusory formulas of liberty, equality, and fraternity, it would leave the way clear for a better administration of justice than at present prevails. We should be dealing with something concrete, something touching the daily life of the nation, instead of something vague and abstract. The new State would be under no illusions as to internationalisation, equality of races, and so on. The workman would be in a position of greater dignity and responsibility; and gilds would, as formerly, become responsible for the quality of their wares: they would not be merely industrial organisations, but social and religious organisations as well. Furthermore, the parish would once again take its place as an important governmental unit under the control of the local aristocracy instead of a soulless "Board." The State, too, would have a greater variety of trades under its control than at present.

It may be that this is an ideal of which the power of money will prevent the realisation. It may be that the capitalists are destined to conquer the nobility, the landed gentry, and the democracy. It may be that the workmen will be practically slaves of the State, and that they will give their labours for the benefit of the middle classes. Whether or no, we can still draw some comfort from Machiavelli's dictum that there is no final end to the State :—

In the changes that they make, countries are wont to pass from order to disorder; for, as nature never suffers the things of this world to come to a stand, so soon as they reach their ultimate perfection, there being nothing higher to which they can mount, they must needs descend; and in like manner when, in their downward course, they have reached, through their disorders, their lowest point of degradation, since then they can descend no lower, they must needs rise. And always in this way from good we descend to evil, and from evil rise again to good. For valour begets tranquillity, tranquillity ease, ease disorder, and disorder ruin. Conversely, out of ruin springs order, from order valour, and thence glory and good fortune.[1]

[1] *Florentine Histories*, bk. v. *ad init.*

X

REMEDIES

WHAT, then, is the remedy for all this? What shall be the policy of the Tory party in the future?

In an earlier chapter of this book I made the statement that the Tory party had a policy of sorts, but that it had no ideas wherewith to back up its policy. But that the policy is exceedingly vague and immature may be seen from the utterances of those who try to explain it. There is something in it about tariffs, and some vague stress is laid upon the unity of the Empire and social reform. No policy of this nature has ever been put forward in detail, least of all by those who persistently call for it. One of the latest articles which came to my notice before sending the present volume to press was that by Mr Maurice Woods,[1] and some passages in it are so typical of what is said by Conservatives generally that I venture to quote them here :—

[1] *The Fortnightly Review*, 1911.

One is sick of hearing that the Unionist party has no constructive policy, and that this is the reason of its impotence. It is simply not true. The creation of a national tariff, and the erection of a system of inter-Imperial preferences, is as great a work of constructive statesmanship as any party has placed on its programme in the last hundred years of English history. It is in a Tory social policy, closely linked up with the system of a national and Imperial tariff, that the party will find its political salvation.

The industrial masses have become a part, perhaps the most important part, of the nation. The preservation of their health and efficiency by such measures as a national tariff and a minimum wage is as much a matter of public concern as the maintenance of an invincible navy. If Toryism will once accept this view, the Tory Democracy will place its leaders in power before many months have run out.

We have here a very fair summary of the Unionist "policy," yet when it is examined there is very little in it. Tentative plans have been suggested for putting a scheme of Imperial tariffs into effect; but practical statesmen will have none of them. Imperial Federation, which, we are assured, must be based on some form of Imperial Preference, would appear to have met with poor luck when its supporters endeavoured to translate its somewhat vague generalities into practice. It is, for many Englishmen and Colonials, an inspiring ideal; but Conservatives

should not lay too much stress upon ideals of which they have not worked out the practical application. For example, Sir Joseph Ward's scheme for an Imperial Council of State as adviser to the Imperial Government was treated with a certain amount of disdain at the 1911 Conference—not, let it be noted, by the representatives of the Liberal Home Government, but by Sir Joseph's fellow-premiers. The proposed Imperial Council of Defence met with a like fate, and the reason was that the various Colonial Ministers felt that such a plan would detract from their own power. It must be borne in mind by British statesmen of both parties that the Colonies are exceedingly jealous ("touchy" would, perhaps, be the better word) about their "liberties," and they will assuredly "turn down" any proposal which appears to them to interfere with their "liberties," even remotely.

At this 1911 Conference too, Mr Harcourt, on behalf of the Home Government, proposed to form a standing Consultative Committee of the Conference itself; but this was likewise rejected by the representatives of the Colonies on the ground that it would hinder direct intercourse between them and the Home Government, and would thus tend, even if only in a slight degree, to lower their status as self-governing countries.

Even Mr Buxton's proposal for an Imperial system of Labour Exchanges was not received with any great enthusiasm.

A perusal of the official reports of the sittings of the Conference will show the reader that there were many minor matters upon which it was found difficult to reach an agreement—*e.g.* the question of coloured seamen, when the Government came into sharp conflict with New Zealand ; and the question of Indian Labour in South Africa, where Lord Crewe came into friendly contact with General Botha.

It may be held that the Colonies are eager to act with us in the defence of the Empire—that they must do so, in fact, in the event of any big war. But even this arrangement must be accepted with some modification. It is the clearly expressed determination of Canada and Australia to have national navies of their own, which are not to be used by the Home Government unless the definite consent of the Colonies in question has previously been obtained. In other words, the Colonies intend to be self-governing countries in their plans of defence just as much as in everything else. It will be seen, then, that even the smallest proposal connected with Imperial Federation has many difficulties to overcome before it can be put into practice, and in the meantime

it looks quite a hopeless impossibility to reach an agreement on Imperial Preference. In a federalised empire, Imperial Preference would not merely have to be considered from the point of view of the economic relations between the Colonies and the Mother Country, but also from the point of view of the economic relations of the Colonies among themselves. No Imperialistic economist has ever yet put forward a proposal to show how this difficulty would be met.

It is doubtless true, to take another point raised by Mr Woods, as by all the Tory writers on this subject, that the Conservatives, like any other political party, will not make much headway if they do not come out with a definite scheme of social reform. But the Tories would be well advised to cease from saying that their programme of social reform depends on their programme of tariff reform. It seems evident that the Colonies do not care for the Conservative programme of tariff reform or for any of the various suggestions put forward by the Conservatives for Imperial Federation. It is wrong to say, as Mr Woods and other writers do, that "the creation of a national tariff and the erection of a system of inter-Imperial preferences is as great a work of constructive statesmanship as any party has placed on its programme in the last hundred

years of English history." There is, as I have said, no scheme ; and the tentative proposals made for establishing one have been rejected by the parties most intimately concerned in it, viz. the Colonies themselves. It is therefore wrong likewise to say that " it is in a Tory social policy, closely linked up with the system of a national and Imperial tariff, that the party will find its political salvation." I myself, theoretically, am an Imperialist and Tariff Reformer, but I differ from other Imperialists and Tariff Reformers in that I have studied the question of federalism with some minuteness. There will always, in my opinion, be a bond of sentiment between the Colonies and the Home Country ; but a bond of economics or a bond of Imperial defence is practically impossible.

Indeed, when this loose talk about our Colonies is now so much in evidence, I shall be doing some service to the Conservative party by pointing out that there is a sentimentality of Imperialism as well as a sentimentality of Liberalism. The sentimentalist, who pretends to feel what he does not feel, and whose habit of constant repetition sometimes deludes him into the belief that he actually possesses a feeling which is quite foreign to him, and the idealist, who loses himself in clouds of impracticable schemes, owe their origin

in politics to the Liberal party. But the influence of Bentham and Mill, as I have already endeavoured to emphasise, has not been confined to their original disciples, but has spread among a party which never should have had anything to do with their doctrines. As instances of Liberal sentimentality and idealism, I may mention the principle of the equality of races, the belief that arbitration can ever form a substitute for war, and the belief in the theory of internationalisation, upon which Professor Hobhouse lays no little stress. These and hundreds of other Liberal schemes are fantastic and idealistic, certainly ; but let it be acknowledged that there are equally fantastic schemes proposed by the Conservative party, not because they are justified by the philosophy of Conservatism, but simply because Conservatives have muddled and confused their own philosophy with that of their most extreme opponents.

As instances of Conservative sentimentality, let me mention the theory regarding the " creation of a national tariff and the erection of a system of inter-Imperial preferences," together with the theory of a " Tory social policy closely linked up with the system of a national and Imperial tariff." These theories bear every resemblance to the Liberal theories mentioned above, for they are

of an analogous nature. They are put forward by politicians who feel the necessity for a good party cry rather than by statesmen who actually believe in them ; and their similarity is further seen in the fact that they break down hopelessly when any attempt is made to put them into practice. The light-headed idealist who believes that arbitration treaties will ultimately put an end to war will be undeceived some day by the roar of cannon ; but not more so, surely, than the idealists of the other party who believe that meaningless phrases about Imperial preference can be written down as an abracadabra and utilised as an economic and sociological prophylactic.

We are left with a third statement by Mr Woods—who, I repeat, merely typifies a vast number of Imperial writers and speakers—in which he says, speaking of the working classes : " The preservation of their health and efficiency by such measures as a national tariff and a minimum wage is as much a matter of public concern as an invincible navy." I say emphatically that a declaration like this betrays gross ignorance of the British working man and gross ignorance of economic facts. If statements like these are persisted in, the Conservative party as a whole will be utterly shipwrecked within the next fifteen years. It was made sufficiently clear

during the discussions throughout the country on the Insurance Bill that when the ruling authorities speak of the workman's "efficiency" and the preservation of his health, they refer to his efficiency from the point of view of the employer. It is the employer who is tacitly expected to benefit from any increased efficiency of the workman, rather than the workman himself or his family. In speaking like this, Mr Woods and his friends are unconsciously imitating the tone and doctrines of the Liberals, whose various measures for the alleged relief of the workman (*e.g.* the Insurance Bill) consist in making deductions from his wages and spending on his behalf, whether he likes it or not, the money thus acquired. In short, modern Conservatives, as I have already, unfortunately, had occasion to point out, are falling into the same error as the young Tories of 1820 and 1830: they become so impressed with the individualistic doctrines of their opponents that they think they themselves can adopt them and remain Tories.

These remarks apply even more particularly to a fallacy which is Liberal in its origin, but which has recently been taken up and propagated by a few Socialists and Conservatives who were not sufficiently acquainted with economics in general, or with their own respective economics in par-

ticular, to know better. I refer to the minimum wage. For the Conservative party to support any minimum wage proposal is simply to take another road to ruin. Even a doctrinaire Socialist like Ferrero pointed out long ago in the Paris *Figaro* [1] that a minimum wage invariably tended, wherever the experiment had been tried, to become a maximum wage ; and this sums up the arguments against it in a single sentence. The modern limited company, which has done away with all the old amicable relations existing between master and workmen, naturally sees no reason why it should add to the minimum, either for length of service or any other reason, when it is possible to get competent men at the minimum wage itself. The minimum wage, in other words, lays down a low level of recompense for all the workmen and prevents that level from being raised. Assuming that a minimum wage were decided upon and measures like the Insurance Bill passed,[2] we should have the State not only

[1] See a translation of this article in *The New Age* of Feb. 9, 1911.

[2] Conservatives, unfortunately, have consistently declared themselves to be in favour of the principle of the Insurance Bill, though it is precisely the principle of the Insurance Bill which is wrong. See, for example, various issues of the *Observer* for the months of June and July 1911 ; and, in fact, almost any Conservative paper about this time, as well as the speeches of the various Conservative leaders in the House of Commons.

prescribing the limits of the workmen's wages, but also telling him in what particular manner he must spend a certain proportion of them,—and this, if the recommendations now before the country were carried out, would be done by the party which generally professes to abhor "Socialism" and anything that tends to interfere with the legitimate freedom of the individual!

It will be sufficiently clear that we are spending the workman's wages for him when we consider the effects of those Bills, always liberal in principle, which have been passed during the last forty years or so. Instead of raising the wages of the workman to a degree which would have been sufficient for him to pay for the education of his family, State schools were established for his benefit, and his wages remained stationary. The workman's wages, again, were not increased to enable him to feed his children properly, but free meals in the school were arranged for instead. As the working man could not afford to pay for the doctoring of his family, the system of free medical inspection was introduced. And now, instead of giving the workman a sufficiently high wage to enable him to pay for his own insurance, it is proposed to make a still further deduction from his wages in connection with the national Insurance Bill. All this means that the workmen

of the country are slowly and gradually, but none the less surely, losing every shred of their independence and coming into the ownership of the State. We are little by little putting into effect the deplorable principles laid down by Mr Sidney Webb, the chief author of the Minority Report, thereby paving the way for what Mr Belloc has very justly called the Servile State : the means of production are gradually coming under the control of a relatively small number of capitalists ; and the workmen, by the system of wage-deductions already referred to, are coming more and more under the control of what we may, for the sake of convenience, call the State.

As will have been seen by the definitions already given, however, we can use the expression " State " here only as a convenience. It would be much more correct to say that the rational conceptions of the State hitherto prevailing, and indeed almost instinctive in the minds of Europeans, are fast becoming overlooked and forgotten. Instead of the modern theoretical State —*i.e.* the entire nation acting in a corporate capacity—we are to all appearances approaching an age when the State will consist of a few capitalists pulling the strings of a bureaucratic government, no matter which party may be in power, and a vast middle class supporting and

at the same time supported by the few capitalists, the present lower classes being no longer looked upon as a human element in the State at all, but as a " commodity " for exploitation, like railways or mines. That this is no fanciful picture will be clear to anyone who has learnt the lessons to be derived from the London Dock Strike of 1889, the Engineers' Strike of 1892, and the London Dock Strike and the Railway Strike of 1911. In every case the workmen, while apparently gaining a temporary victory, were ultimately beaten by the capitalistic interests and reduced each time to a greater state of dependence and humiliation than they were in before.

Coming back to our subject, however, we find that the attitude of the Colonies sufficiently indicates that we cannot have our policy of social reform based upon a preferential tariff ; but the resources of economics are none the less not exhausted. Within the limits of a generation one party or another will inevitably find itself driven in a different economic direction, and this direction will take the form of a considerable increase in the number of commercial undertakings owned by the State. It does not follow that the State ownership of such undertakings will necessarily come under the heading of " Socialism " or " Communism," as these words

are usually understood, any more than the average man thinks of Socialism or Communism in connection with the Post Office or the Navy. Yet there are other undertakings which are liable to State control in as great a degree as either of these.

I do not, of course, assert that this economic trend is eminently just, or even that it is at all desirable ; but in considering remedies for the present disorganisation and unrest in the lives of civilised peoples, we cannot overlook the individualistic philosophy of the last century or so, or endeavour to lay down new schemes of social order without reckoning upon the factors which this philosophy has brought about. It was the economic side of this philosophy which gave rise to municipal ownership, *e.g.* of water and gas works, electric light stations, and tramways, and which has also resulted in the State ownership of the telegraph and telephone services. In some continental countries, of course, the trend has gone even further, and we find several railway systems under governmental control in Germany and France. This is a tendency which we cannot stop, because to stop it we should have to eradicate entirely the effects of that individualistic philosophy which has inspired the English people since the early part of the nineteenth century ; and this is obviously out of the question. But

we may control and regulate the tendency, and the party which can regulate it to the best advantage of the country is the party which is destined to come into power and stay there for a considerable time.[1] Let the Conservatives find out what forms of industry should be owned by the State and what forms should be owned by private individuals. By establishing a clear distinction in these respects they will escape the crude plans of the extreme Socialists, and at the same time undermine the purely capitalistic support given to the Liberals. The land must again be the starting point of a Conservative policy; but a land policy is useless in itself without some further economical policy.

When speaking of economical distinctions, however, there is one that must be insisted upon, viz. the distinction between Socialism and Communism.[2] There are types of business, such as the Post Office, which, while owned by the State, are "run" by the State at a profit like any other commercial concern. The profit on the Post Office, for instance, is usually between three and four millions a year; and the telephones will show

[1] "I believe that he will prosper most whose mode of acting adapts itself to the character of the times; and conversely that he will be unprosperous with whose mode of acting the times do not agree" (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ch. xxv.).

[2] See, for example, *The New Age* for August 3 and 10, 1911.

proportionate earnings. A similar remark as to State profit-making applies to the Ouest-Etat Railway in France, and to the German State lines. There are other things, however, out of which the State can make no profit in actual cash, and which from a business point of view would be reckoned as non-productive departments. Such are the police force, the Navy, the Army, the Diplomatic Service, and various branches of the Civil Service. It is obvious that these things stand on a different footing from businesses which the State can own and manage at a profit. The latter will in time necessarily include those forms of trade in connection with which there is no particularly individual work, such as the railways, the mines, and the canals. But it will always be impossible—and this is a point which even the most extreme Socialist and Communist must come to recognise — to arrange for State control of trades requiring individual attention on the part of those engaged in them. While, for example, no one employed by any railway or any mine can devote individual attention to the particular work he has to do, a tailor must give individual attention to every suit he cuts, just as a cabinet-maker must devote individual attention to his furniture.

Let me repeat then, to make this distinction quite clear : as the result of an individualistic

propaganda, and whether we like it or not, our economic system is tending more and more in the direction of state-ownership—let us drop the words Socialism and Communism, to which so many different meanings are attached by different writers, and refer to this tendency as nationalisation. If this new development in economics is scientifically studied, checked, regulated, and applied by the Conservative party, that party is bound to come into power. For this movement can no longer continue on haphazard lines. Sooner or later it will have to be regulated by some political party, or we shall find ourselves in an economic muddle, with politicians hopelessly at variance respecting the areas of State ownership and the areas of individual ownership.

When we speak of individual ownership, of course, we must not confuse this in any way with the meaning we attach to individualistic philosophy. Far from leaving the nation as a collection of segregated atoms, we shall bring about a modified revival of the gild system if we once again enable the workman to give to his work that individual attention which was possible in the Middle Ages—and, in fact, down to the nineteenth century—that individual attention which has resulted in so many choice specimens of handicrafts. Those who realise the value attach-

ing to a volume from the Caxton or the Aldine Press will be in a position to realise to what an extent the workman's status will be raised if the present economic system, based as it is on individualistic economics, is altered. But it will take more than Imperial preference to change this system, and those who rely upon Imperial preference alone will work until doomsday without achieving any tangible results.

Individualism and "thinking for one's self" inevitably lead to chaos in artistry or handicrafts; for the individualist must necessarily ignore the influence of tradition. In the Middle Ages, however, when the workman gave individual attention to his work, he did so under a strong traditional influence—a matter which is dealt with by Mr Arthur J. Penty in one of the most suggestive books concerning gilds ever written. As Mr Penty points out, tradition in relation to the arts

> may be defined as a current language of design, and, indeed, design in the Middle Ages bears a striking resemblance to the language of speech, in that the faculty of design was not, as it is to-day, the exclusive possession of a caste—a body of men who give prescriptions for the craftsmen to dispense—but, like language, was a common possession of the whole people. Certain traditional ways of working, certain ideas of design and technique were universally recognised, so

that when the craftsman was called to design he was not, like his modern successor, compelled to create something out of nothing, but had this tradition ready to hand as the vehicle of expression understood by all. It was thus that the arts and crafts of former times were identical—the artist was always a craftsman, while the craftsman was always an artist.[1]

It is hardly necessary to add that conditions like these do not prevail at the present day. The great development of machinery during the nineteenth century has resulted in the human element being supplanted by the mechanical. Mr Penty is, therefore, quite justified in adding that the modern craftsman, "deprived of the guidance of a healthy tradition, is surrounded on all sides by forms which have persisted, though debased and vulgarised, while the thought which created them has been lost."

As Matthew Arnold said long ago, faith in machinery is our besetting danger: "Often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve; but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself."[2] The modern social reformer, therefore, if he is really a reformer at all, and not merely desirous of serving the

[1] Arthur J. Penty, *The Restoration of the Gild System*, ch. ii.

[2] *Culture and Anarchy*, ch. i.

capitalists whether or not he benefits the workmen, will therefore heartily echo Mr Penty's plea for the restoration of the gild system and the revival of handicrafts. It is true that the difficulties in the way of any such movement are very great, but they are by no means insurmountable. They are great merely because practically all our modern sociologists and economists are still fatally under the influence of the Liberal economics of the nineteenth century. The so-called "Philosophical Radicals" were at one with Cobden, Bright, and Adam Smith in practically denying that landed property had any rights; while, on the other hand, they had no objection to offer to the personal property of the middle classes. Mill, in his turn, refused to countenance landed property, but he did recognise the wealth arising from labour and from capital.

Before our social problems can be dealt with, then, the leaders of public opinion must come to recognise that the basis of the State lies in the land (*i.e.* agriculture), and not purely and simply in industries, which would now appear to be the general belief. They must also recognise that the State is inevitably destined to take over what are now regarded as ordinary branches of commerce, such as the railways, the mines, the canals, tramways, gas works, electric light stations, and

possibly also—though in England this is not a matter of such great concern—the forests: all these things, of course, being additions to what may be called the State commerce already existing, such as the Post Office, the telegraph service, the telephone service, and the various forms of industry carried on in the Government dockyards and arsenals.

It is clear, however, that there are various forms of labour with which the State can have nothing to do—those forms in which, as I have already indicated, the personal element enters to a large extent. State shoe-makers, State tailors, State barbers, State upholsterers, or even State paper-hangers, would be an abomination; and it is here that the Conservative social reformer of the future will necessarily become entirely dissociated from the Socialist, the Communist, and probably also the Liberal. There are thus trades which may be taken over entirely by the State, as there are others which must remain what, for want of a better expression, we may call completely personal. There may, however, be forms of industry which may not be actually taken over by the State in their entirety, but may partly remain in private hands. It seems to me that engineering is one of these: anyone who has had to do with machinery will have observed that the

personal element enters into it to a large extent, even though the iron-founder may not devote so much attention to his casting as the cabinet-maker does to the legs of a table.

There are, again, branches of industry in regard to which the rising school of economists is divided in opinion. The weaving of carpets, for example, is not a fit branch of trade for the State to devote its attention to, and the finer grades of Irish or Nottingham lace are certainly not staples in the making of which machinery can be employed. The cotton and linen industries, again, may be partly taken over by the State and partly left in private hands. It may, in short, be laid down as a rough-and-ready general rule that the State will in future deal with anything purely mechanical, while the finer branches of industry will be left in private hands. The linen trade furnishes a good example of this. Everyone knows that the finer qualities of handkerchiefs, sheets, napkins, and so forth must be made by hand, as is done to such a large extent in Ireland and Switzerland even at the present day. On the other hand, the cheaper and coarser qualities of linen and cotton goods can easily be turned out by machinery in standardised forms.

This leads us to another branch of our inquiry. While the tendency of economics is in the direc-

tion of the State control of certain industries, it would obviously be of no benefit to the workman if he were merely to exchange one sweater for another. The mere fact that a business is being carried on by the State is no guarantee that the workmen will not be underpaid or that their hours of labour will be shorter than if they were serving a private employer. For example, the majority of our Post Office clerks are overworked and underpaid, and it is questionable whether the lower grades of our soldiers and sailors are as well treated as they might be. When we get a truly representative form of government, and not the mere government by delegation which we now have, one of the first cares of our representatives will be to see that government employees are well treated, both in respect of salaries and hours of work.

It may be argued that the revival of handicrafts will necessarily lead to the ultimate extinction of many capitalists and capitalistic enterprises, and that this may reduce the wealth of the country and set it at a disadvantage in regard to our trade throughout the world. This, however, is not quite true. We cannot rid ourselves of the influence of engineering developments during the nineteenth century, and heavily capitalised firms will still be necessary for the

carrying out of large engineering and building contracts. But the revival of handicrafts will certainly raise the status of the workman, and will do no harm if it tends to rid us of the influence of cosmopolitan speculators.

There is, at all events, at least one factor to which the revival of handicrafts would give rise, and that is the immediate curtailment and gradual abolition of the Trust system. It is sometimes urged that the accumulation of large blocks of capital by the amalgamation of several firms engaged in the same business has the effect of lowering prices to the consumer, and that therefore the poorer classes are benefited by the Trusts in the long run. This argument, however, is fallacious, as is also the claim that Trusts lead to increased business efficiency and a stoppage of waste. Two typical American Trusts, the Standard Oil Company and the United States Steel Corporation, have certainly not lowered prices to the consumer, nor, to take another example, did the Meat Trust do so when it started its operations.

Why, indeed, should our modern economics be based on the assumption that the consumer should have the primary consideration, and that the producer need not be thought of at all? As Mr Penty suggests: "To legislate on the basis

that all are consumers, while only some are producers, is obviously to put a premium on idleness, for only the idle consume without producing." When we consider the nineteenth-century economics, however, the reason of this at once becomes clear. The Manchester school and its offshoots were predominant in the economic world of the time, and they legislated solely for the middle classes. It is, indeed, the middle classes and not the aristocracy at which the labour-socialist epithet of "parasite" should be flung, for the middle classes are parasites pure and simple; they consume everything and they produce nothing. The middle classes, in fact, are more than "middle" in status; for they are actually middlemen in commerce. It is they who come between the man who has something to sell and the man who wants to buy; and in doing this they perform a function which under a better organised sociological system would not be found necessary to anything like the same extent as at present. When Liberal politicians speak of the middle classes as the "backbone of the country"—a phrase which is often heard at election times—they are deluding themselves into the belief that something is what it is not. The real backbone, or rather body, of the country, is composed of the agri-

culturists and handicraftsmen ; and, if physical terms are preferred in this connection, the "head" of the country is composed of the relatively few philosophers, aristocrats, and landed gentry who act as the leaders of what would otherwise degenerate into an unruly mob.

I have indicated certain economical remedies : I have now to mention a remedy which is not a remedy at all, although often put forward as one, viz. the abolition of the party system. The party system is too deeply ground into the bones of the English people to be abolished ; although we are bound to agree with Mr Belloc as to the evil influences of the party caucus. Even Dr von Gneist himself, in his book on the English Parliament, shows us clearly enough that we cannot get rid of the party system—at all events, let us say, the party system as it was understood in the eighteenth century, though not necessarily the caucus-ridden party system of the present day.

As for those who advocate a business government, it need only be said that we all want a business government if by this term is meant a government run on sound commercial principles, with the avoidance of corruption and waste. Such a government, however, must not pay such low salaries as the average employer does. But

if by the expression is meant a government run simply by business men, then it must be said at once that we want none of it. For government requires imagination, and this is precisely the quality in which business men are lacking.

XI

CONCLUSION

I AM aware that many of the points raised in this book are new, and consequently suspect. I refer more particularly to the suggestion that the Conservative party should find out, in accordance with the indications I have given, what forms of industry and what branches of commerce should be owned by the State, and that it should then help the State gradually to take over such industries, while steadily keeping in view the fact that there are certain trades which cannot be taken out of private hands. The problem of poverty is the most pressing problem of our time; it is more pressing than any of the stock questions raised by the caucuses for discussion in the House of Commons or during election campaigns. The disestablishment of the Church in Wales, for example, may cause at the time as much fury as the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland forty years ago; yet who now talks of the in-

justice of the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland ? As for the Home Rule question, a definite grant of Home Rule to Ireland would undoubtedly lead to much bitterness and possibly some riots in Ulster and elsewhere ; but in a few years all that would be forgotten. The Irish Parliament would presumably settle down to its work, and no doubt Irish caucuses would come into being to " run " the Dublin House of Commons for the benefit of the Parliamentary leaders and to the disadvantage of the people.

As for education, the meaning attached to this word when the subject comes up for discussion in the House of Commons cannot be taken seriously. Our legislators are not concerned with improving the schools or adapting the curriculum of the State educational institutions to the exigencies of modern life. When education is discussed in Parliament, we never hear anything of the underpaid teachers, the absurd curricula, the pompousness of those teachers who have been promoted to inspectorships, or the bullying and wire-pulling of the local educational authorities. There is but one topic : to what extent religion should be taught in the schools, and whether it should be taught, putting the matter bluntly, by one set of bigots or another. On the whole, the fanatic dissenter is what we should pray to

be saved from. It is, nevertheless, an ironical comment on English Christianity to know that the jarring sects have never been able to decide upon a common basis on which their religion can be taught. To find the religious problem in connection with our State schools practically as acute to-day as it was half a century ago is a difficult thing for a modern sociologist to understand.

These matters, however, are not the most important with which we have to deal. The question is not what we are going to do about Welsh disestablishment or Home Rule; but rather, what are we going to do about the poverty, misery, helplessness, and disease of so astoundingly large a proportion of our population? This problem differs from the others referred to in that it is always with us, and is brought nearer home to us than more abstract questions; and it is a problem for which our short-sighted politicians, in so far as we may judge from their public utterances, are quite unable to find a solution. It is a problem which raises many wide and complex issues. For example, it would be not entirely solved even if employers did agree to raise wages and to keep down profits and dividends, while maintaining prices at a normal level. Since the beginning of our industrial era—let us

put it approximately at 1770—our lower classes have been ground down, exploited, and neglected. They are preparing to demand, and rightly, a return to the older order of things : a modified feudalism, if necessary, rather than the illusory freedom of the present heartless commercialism, with the almost brutal treatment to which they are subjected. Merely higher wages alone will not solve this aspect of the problem, though I suggest that the raising of the status of the workman by reviving handicrafts would tend to contribute largely towards its solution.

The revival of handicrafts, again, will lead to a revival of apprenticeship, and this will, at all events, do away with the scandal of boy and girl labour. The extension of apprenticeship to girls follows as a matter of course—no reason has ever been shown why the system should not be so extended. Of course, when we speak of the raising of the workman's status, something more than his actual social position is meant. Instead of employing him as a purely mechanical tool, as is done at present, we shall develop his mind and set him in a better position to appreciate the advantages of leisure. At present, as Mr Penty has remarked, we provide the workman with free libraries and free museums instead of giving him money and time to indulge in his

own amusements. If he takes advantage of the free libraries, he is insensibly urged on to a type of existence which our present social system allows him neither the leisure nor the means to live up to. And yet some sociologists wonder why there should be a spirit of discontent in the lower ranks of society !

Assuming, then, that the Conservatives wish to come back to power when the next general election takes place, it must be impressed upon the leaders of the party, but more particularly upon the extreme tariff reformers, that tariff reform alone will not secure the support of the working classes. There must be a good policy of social reform, and this policy must not be based wholly upon tariff reform. Stress must be laid upon the land and agriculture. Those who believe that our agriculture is dead or dying will do well to consult official statistics on the point. It is, I say again and again, very unfortunate that the Conservatives as a body have tamely submitted to be allied in the minds of the working classes with the interests of capitalists and large employers. Conservatism has no antipathy to capital or industry ; it merely postulates that the land comes first, and that the interests of the workman and his position in the State must be taken into consideration before the interests of capital.

The emphasis laid by the Liberal press upon the "people" may safely be discounted; for when the Liberal papers speak of the "people," they refer to the middle classes, and especially to the lower middle classes.

Another hint may be given to the organisers of the Conservative propaganda. The working classes and the agricultural labourers are not altogether devoid of common sense. If the party organisers think that the working classes are moved by the hideous posters now so prominently displayed at election times, it can only be said of them that they are poor psychologists. It is true that the workman who lives in the town is usually inferior in natural intelligence to the workman who lives in the country; but both have a certain amount of perspicacity. It is not sufficient to enable them to take a profound interest in the minute details of foreign and colonial affairs; but it is sufficient to enable them to distinguish the most prominent aspect of any question before them, and to decide accordingly.

Before the next political campaign is entered upon, however, the Conservative leaders must take care to dissociate themselves from the Liberal leaders more than they have done recently. There must be no consultations between the leaders of the parties as to what alternative

programmes shall be offered to the country. Licensing, education, and Welsh disestablishment are abstract and unattractive questions, although it may still be possible to stir up a little fuss over Home Rule and the dismemberment of the Empire. I have said, however, that these are not the main questions. Let the Conservative party concentrate its powers upon the problem of poverty. Let it suggest the remedies I have described, and let us see what the Liberal counter-proposals will be. This more than anything else will enable the working classes of the country to judge which of the two great political parties is on the side of capital and which of them is on the side of labour.

It may be objected—as, after the election campaign at the end of 1910, a writer in the *National Review* did object—that the lower classes are totally unable to judge the rights and wrongs of political questions, or to come to a decision on them ; that they are coarse, ill-natured, and uneducated, thoroughly selfish, and utterly indifferent to the welfare of the Empire. This may be an explanation, but not an excuse. If the working classes, whether urban or rural, are really in this condition, the fault is not theirs. It is partly the fault of the aristocracy, who long ago began to neglect their duties towards the

lower orders; but it is more particularly the fault of the greedy middle classes, who have given their attention for more than a century to the careful exploitation of the workers. The workman, after all, is a human being. Let the upper classes once more take an interest in his welfare, his needs, and his recreations, and the workman will once again become what he was under the more rational order of society that existed up to the eighteenth century. There is more than a merely demagogic outburst (and there is incidentally a testimonial to Sir R. K. Wilson's book already referred to) in the inscription on some of the Chartist banners: "Curse your charity, we want justice!"

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